NAPOLEON
BISEXUAL EMPEROR

Major-General Frank Richardson, M.D.

Napoleon as a public figure is a well documented and familiar subject. Far less familiar is Napoleon, the private man, with the hopes, fears and failings, both emotional and physical that formulated the ambition and drive that led him to the Imperial throne.

General Richardson has devoted ten years to the writing and research of this informed study into the personal and sexual side of Napoleon's life, and of how these factors affected his dedication to military supremacy. Much has been written about his relationships with his two wives, Josephine and Marie Louise, from the emotional point of view, but now the physical aspect is discussed in his relations with them and with his mistresses; these together with his relationships with men result in a totally new understanding of this complex figure.

Frank Richardson attained the rank of Major-General in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and from 1956 to 1961 was Director Medical Services, BAOR. From his years of experience in dealing with the psychological and sexual problems of the ordinary soldier, he has written with authority and insight of the stresses and sexual inadequacies that impelled Napoleon relentlessly forward to his finally tragic destiny.

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To dearest Hope. with best love

Frank.

and I only hope the bits
you haven't seen won't
disappoint you!

The author, Major-General Frank Richardson, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., M.D., joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1927 and from 1956 to 1961 he was Director of Medical Services of the British Army of the Rhine. His book *Napoleon: Bisexual Emperor* is the fruit of ten years of study of Napoleonic material.

— *Publishers' Note*

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Two generals unwittingly started me off – Sir Horatius Murray and Sir Dudley Ward. Sir Horatius, championing Napoleon against my hero Wellington, drove me to find out more about the Emperor; and much later, when Sir Dudley's brandy had lured me into expressing some eccentric views about Napoleon, I had to justify these in an essay out of which ultimately grew this book.

I have to acknowledge helpful advice about my chapters on Napoleon's medical and psychological history from Army medical colleagues, Brigadier J. Mackay Dick and Colonel R.G. Davies; and, without a timely caution from an old friend, Professor Sir Derrick Dunlop, my skates would have carried me over some thin ice in the field of endocrinology.

These friends do not necessarily support any, let alone all, of my views. Michael Leiris, in *Literature considered as a Bullfight*, explains that when writing he likes to share the bullfighter's knowledge that he risks being gored. If I am to be gored by Bonapartist bulls it must be on my own account without invoking protection from professional picadors.

Monsignor James Scanlan, Archbishop of Glasgow, kindly put me in touch with Miss Eileen Millar of Glasgow University who kept me straight about 'Saint Napoleon'. The late Mr R.F. Delderfield gave me encouragement and permission to quote from *Napoleon in Love* (Hodder and Stoughton 1959).

Throughout the book I quote, and I do so with profound respect, the views of Monsieur Claude Manceron, whose specialty is minute dissection of short periods in Napoleon's life – *Austerlitz* 1966 and *Napoleon Recaptures Paris* 1968 (Geo Allen & Unwin); *Which Way to Turn* 1960 (Jonathan Cape). The detail in these exquisite miniatures proclaims the enormous range of his research and his intimate knowledge of his hero.

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copyright: *Napoleon's Son* by A. Castellot, (Hamish Hamilton Ltd.); *Empress Innocence* by M.E. Ravage (Wm. Heinemann), *Personality & Power* by Shaw Desmond, (Rockcliff Publishing Corporation), *Napoleon* by Maximilien Vox, (Evergreen Books); *The Spectrum of Pain* by Richard Serjeant (Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd.), *Napoleon and his Women Friends* by G. Aretz, (Allen & Unwin).

In the world of libraries, I have the luck to live near the National Library of Scotland, with its charming and helpful staff, and to have enjoyed for over twenty years the friendship of Mr D.W. King, the Chief Librarian of the British Army. I must also thank the librarians of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh; the British Museum; the Wellcome Historical Medical Library; the Prince Consort's Library, Aldershot; and, for information about *der junge Feldjäger*, Mr Paul Winkler, The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

To my wife (who before I 'took up with' Napoleon used to complain that she shared her bed with two dukes – Marlborough and Wellington) my children, relatives and few remaining friends I apologize for twelve years of Napoleon-boredom. They probably hope that I have got it out of my system by finishing my book, which I could hardly have done without guidance from Mr David Fletcher, a literary plastic surgeon who showed me how to shape an untidy jumble of features into the semblance of a face.

The Publishers would like to thank Mr Harold Jennings and Messrs. John Murray for their help in providing some of the illustrations.

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INTRODUCTION

More books have been written about Napoleon than about any other human being. Since one author estimated the 'printed items about the man and his legend' at more than two hundred thousand, many more have been added to the list. By judicious and partisan selection from this wealth of material one could 'prove' almost any theory about him which one might care to propose; but, as C.S. Forester says in his book *Napoleon and his Court:* 'The most one can hope for is to form one's own conclusions about him; one cannot hope to form other peoples.'

In this spirit I offer some speculations about the psychological processes which could have helped to shape the astonishing character of this great man, which I believe can be supported by reasonable deductions from some facts about his character, his conduct and particularly his physical make-up which have so far received little attention.

My personal and psychoanalytical approach may excuse the occasional use of the first person singular. The pontifical, almost royal, 'we' used to such splendid effect by the fifth Earl of Rosebery in his great work *Napoleon The Last Phase*, though exactly right for a noble lord who found time in an active political career to produce that classic contribution to the Napoleonic literature, hardly accords with the spirit of modern writing. Continued use of the impersonal 'one' gets a little complicated, and to refer to myself as 'the writer' is not only stilted but presumptuous in one who is making a first foray into this overcrowded field. I dislike what might be called the 'mused Napoleon' kind of book, in which the author presumes to portray the feelings and thoughts of his subject – one might almost say his victim.

In one such book recently translated into English, *Napoleon and His Ladies*,* the author, Monsieur Guy Breton, tells us what

* Robert Hale Ltd., 1965

Napoleon was thinking before, during and after his adventures in bed with the endless series of women mentioned in the book. Describing Napoleon's preoccupation with 'shapely rumps' he tells us that they 'set his palms itching'.

I should admit that my special interest in Napoleon began in dislike for a great man who could be so petty as to leave money to a Frenchman who tried to assassinate Wellington; but the more I read about him the more I became convinced that certain unattractive aspects of his character could be explained on psychological grounds, and thus dislike became to some extent overlaid by understanding, and even pity. Those who are addicted to what has been described by the horrid word 'Napoleonolatry' may be as irritated by any suggestion of pity for the hero as they are by criticism. Pity may seem almost an impertinence but there were times in his life when his worst enemies could hardly have denied it to him. In any case he stands serenely on the pedestal of the Napoleonic Legend, indifferent alike to pity or censure, with less to fear than any other figure in history from the modern sport of knocking down idols or exposing their feet of clay.

Nothing is more astonishing than the growth of the Napoleonic Legend, which has laid succeeding generations so completely under its spell that it is a shock to realize that, even when Napoleon was at the pinnacle of his fame, he was hated by millions of Frenchmen. Our experience of wartime propaganda enables us to understand the virulence and the intemperate language with which English writers reviled 'Boney'; but it is surprising to learn how hostile were many French writers even during his lifetime.

This subject is brilliantly surveyed by Professor Pieter Geyl in his book *Napoleon For and Against*, which is indispensable to an understanding of what Napoleon has meant to the French. Since the publication of this book in 1949 three names have been added to the list of French authors who are hostile to Napoleon – Jean Savant, Maximilien Vox, and, latest and bitterest of them all, Henri Guillemin; but the most recent English biographer, Vincent Cronin, handomely redresses the balance with his portrait of a Napoleon of heroic proportions. Monsieur Guillemin writing in 1969 cannot find one good word for the Corsican brigand. An equally abusive author in our own country is Conal O'Riordan, who dedicated his book (1953) to Napoleon's un-numbered devotees who know everything about him except the truth.

What is the truth about Napoleon?

The French academician Jacques Bainville, one of his great biographers, expressed the opinion that despite the numerous psychological portraits of Napoleon which have been attempted he always escapes from the pages in which writers have sought to confine him. This may be because such writers have failed to follow the proper sequence which is essential in making any psychological diagnosis. This must begin with the recording of a careful history followed by a thorough physical examination. These steps are represented by my first two chapters, and in the third and fourth chapters special psychological factors in Napoleon's life are examined, bringing us to the point at which it is possible to form an opinion about the psychological pattern of his life. The story of his relations with women and men seems to fit very well into the anticipated pattern. Since Frédéric Masson wrote *Napoleon and the Fair Sex* there have been several books with similar titles, but, by including a chapter on Napoleon and the male sex, I am breaking some new ground, which may be an excuse for writing yet another book about Napoleon.

To attempt a psychological diagnosis of Napoleon in defiance of Bainville's opinion may be rash, but it is mainly things said by Napoleon himself which embolden me to try. The American critic Susan Sontag considers that 'the great writers of France have been concerned to a singular extent with the detached presentation of intimate feelings, particularly those connected with sexuality and ambition'.* These subjects obsessed Napoleon.

This book is not just a chronicle of nineteenth century scandal but a serious attempt by a doctor to understand what the French surgeon lieutenant general, Raoul Brice, called 'The Riddle of Napoleon'. It may seem that my selection from the extensive literature of this period of history has been unduly partisan, and designed to expose the unpleasant side of Napoleon's nature. Glimpses of his better side are seen, but few would deny that in him aggressiveness predominated, and the butcher's bill for this was enormous. If we could all control aggression and show to the world only our better nature there would be little need for psychiatrists. It is particularly for the unpleasant side of Napoleon's character that psychological explanations must be sought.

A useful contribution to the study of military leadership and of the growth of dictatorship would be made by anyone who could accurately define what gave Napoleon his magnetic sway over the

**Against Interpretation and Other Essays.* Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967.

hearts and minds of men; what made thousands of Frenchmen follow him to death or glory even after he had lost and abandoned three great armies.

I cannot say that in researching into Napoleon's private life I was at first prompted by any such purpose as the study of leadership or the pathogenesis of dictatorship, but some reflections on this broader theme naturally emerge from the study of such an outstanding leader. For the world it is important that never again should one man's ambition lead to war, but to extract from the story of the growth of Napoleon's power and his legend a prescription for averting such a catastrophe demands psychoanalysis of the French nation in his day and of the people of the satellite countries who followed his eagles. I have made only brief comments on that theme. The analysis of Napoleon's character is a sufficiently awe-inspiring challenge. Hilaire Belloc condemned 'the wretched pedantry of reference which has half-killed history in our time'. By saying that anything in this book which is not plainly an expression of my personal opinion, or for which no reference is given in the text, is to be found in the list of books at the end of this book, I am following the example of several previous writers on the subject of Napoleon.

CHAPTER I

THE COMPLEX CHARACTER OF NAPOLEON

Most of us must be aware of a good side and a bad side to our nature, and it was not unusually perceptive of Napoleon to say of himself: 'There are two men in me – the man of brains and the man of heart.' But he never did anything by halves and, unlike other historical characters in whom there is usually some agreement between the 'good' and the 'bad' portraits, something discernible of the same general outline, in Napoleon's case the contrasts in his nature were so pronounced that we might be reading about two entirely different men.

Archbishop Whately even published a pamphlet casting doubt on the existence of Napoleon, suggesting that the name could have been applied to any successful French general of the period. This, we are told by the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was in the nature of a philosophical exercise 'designed to hoist Hume with his own petard'; but it seems a bit excessive to have carried the ponderous archiepiscopal leg-pull through at least ten editions between 1841 and 1865. The same theme had been used by an earlier author Jean-Baptiste Pérès in *The Grand Erratum; The non-existence of Napoleon proved* in 1827.

But whether he was joking or serious we can agree with the archbishop when he says that 'it is certain that to no one were ever assigned so many dissimilar characters'. An English writer, W.H. Hudson, who in 1915 ended his book about Napoleon with the verdict 'a colossal image with feet of clay', and admitted that his feelings for him were 'not admiration but aversion, not unmingled with pity and contempt' was perhaps going a bit too far, but he was echoing similar expressions used in the previous century by the historian J.A. Froude. Other writers have gone just as far in the opposite direction, almost deifying Napoleon and reverently using capital letters when the pronouns 'Him' and 'His' refer to 'The Revolution Made Man'. Goethe referred to him as a daimoniac being, neither god nor devil but something in between;

and many writers have devoted chapters to the devil or angel theme. Marshal Marmont, one of his oldest friends, said: 'There are two men in him, physically and morally'; and the French historian Jung called him 'a living synthesis of good and evil'. Madame de Rémusat, who once loved him, finally came to see only the bad side, and wrote: 'Bonaparte has an innate evil nature, an innate taste for evil in great things as in small.'

His dual nature was perceptible quite early in his career, and when he was about twenty-seven Madame Permon, a friend of his mother, who had befriended him in his early days in Paris, said to him: 'Napoleon, there are two men in you at this moment. Continue I entreat you to be the man I love and esteem, and above all do not let the other get the better of you.'

Was he a religious man, or did he simply realise the value of religious faith to an army and a nation at war, regarding religion, as the Napoleonic authority Holland Rose believed he did, 'as the useful handmaid of the ruler'? Were cruelty and callousness part of his nature, or could it have been just that he knew that a general must sometimes accept the risk of casualties in the broader interest of a successful battle which may shorten a campaign and in the end forestall further losses? Was his magnetic power over men's hearts just a trick to enslave those whom he regarded as the tools of his ambition? – whom he even despised, for we shall see in Chapter 3 that he actually despised the French. Did he care for his soldiers as much as they believed that he did? Were his dreadful rages partly feigned in order to frighten people? These and other aspects of his character must now be considered.

To present Napoleon as Anti-Christ personified was a convenient weapon in the war-time propaganda of his enemies, and he made their task easy by his frequently expressed disbelief in Christianity and his harsh treatment of the Pope. When Pius VII, after many disagreements, excommunicated Napoleon, the Emperor deported the Pontiff to internment in Savona, relieving him of his archives, his tiara, and the Fisherman's ring, which were carried off to Paris. All this without a single French official resigning his office in a country still nominally Catholic.

On the other hand he earned the gratitude of French Christians by the Concordat, which restored much of the influence of the Church which the Revolution had destroyed. This called for moral courage and by no means all his sturdily Republican generals supported him. The story is told of an answer given to Napoleon by General Delmas after the first celebration of High Mass in

Nôtre Dame in 1802. When asked if he did not think it splendid, Delmas replied: 'All that was missing was a million men who have laid down their lives to destroy what you are building up.'

A pointer to his own attitude is the remark which he once made to General Bertrand: 'If you do not understand that Jesus Christ is God, well – I was wrong in making you a general.'

He was too sound a psychologist to under-estimate the power of religious faith as an element in the morale of armies.

Napoleon was not only the leader of an army but of a great nation, and whatever he may have said in private he knew that his public face must be seen to be that of a true believer. His professed interest in Mahommedanism, and openly declared thoughts of embracing that faith, coincided with his dreams of Eastern conquests and he himself said: 'I was a Mahommedan in Egypt; I shall be a Catholic in France.'

He may have turned away without comment from General Delmas in 1802 in the Cathedral of Nôtre Dame, but by 1811 he felt himself to be on firmer ground. During a little ceremony at which he entrusted to Madame de Montesquiou the care of the Imperial children (there was only one, but he was always an optimist) he said: 'Make my son a good Frenchman and a good Christian'. Then, seeing cynical smiles among the courtiers who remembered his own outspoken disbelief, he added sharply – 'the one cannot go without the other.' It was to him a matter of supreme importance that the self-made dynasty which he was intent upon founding should been seen by all to have the Church's blessing; that he himself should take his place among the annointed ones, rulers of Europe by divine right, into whose hallowed community he so ardently longed to enter on equal terms. It was essential to him to quell a deep sense of social inferiority.

He was more often in conflict than in agreement with the Church, but it is hard to quarrel with his own comment: 'I do not believe in forms of religion, but in the existence of a God'. He said more than once that he sought to get faith because human nature had need of the supernatural. This practical realist was not only surprisingly romantic at heart but intensely superstitious, with a strong belief in destiny, and in his Star, which he once actually pointed out in the sky to Cardinal Fesch. Napoleon's extremely superstitious nature has been attributed to an Arab or Berber strain which he shared with the natives of that part of Corsica where he was born.

As for his Star – General de Gaulle had this to say in his book *Le Fil de l'Epée*: 'What Alexander called his 'hope', Caesar his 'fortune', and Napoleon his 'Star', was this not simply the certain knowledge that a particular gift puts them in such close relation to reality that they dominate it always?'

Napoleon would have liked this, for he loved to think of himself as the successor to great historical figures, Charlemagne, Caesar, and especially Alexander who had the good luck to be both a conqueror and a god.

Napoleon could not quite bring himself to claim divinity but might have liked to do so had he thought that the French people would stomach it. It is hard to see how, in the nineteenth century, he could have gone much further, or how he escaped ridicule for the lengths to which he did go. The idea of having a remote ancestor, Brother Boniface Buonaparte, canonised was apparently not taken very seriously by Napoleon or by the Church, but he actually succeeded in having the day after his own birthday named and celebrated as St Napoleon's Day. August 15th was already booked, as the Feast of the Assumption, and Pius VII would not budge on that; but Napoleon succeeded in having St Roch, whose day was August 16th, sacrificed, thus killing two birds with one stone, conveying a mark of Imperial displeasure to the *curé* of the parish of St Roch, who had refused Christian burial to Mademoiselle Chameroy, a dancer at the Opera. A more evil piece of sacrilege, and one smelling of Hitler's indoctrination of the *Hitler Jugend*, was the introduction of the Imperial Catechism, which, amongst other subtle provisions, taught children that the Emperor was the image of God on Earth, and those who were 'lacking in their duty towards our Emperor resist the order established by God himself, and render themselves worthy of eternal damnation.'

It might be unfair to blame Napoleon for such utterances as one made by a senator and President of the Tribune, who likened Napoleon's mother, Madame Mère, to the Virgin Mary, adding: 'The conception which you had in bearing within your womb the great Napoleon was assuredly nothing else but a divine inspiration.' No public rebuke followed this profane nonsense, so perhaps the Emperor was not unduly offended by it.

It has been suggested that his hostility to Christianity originated at the military school of Brienne, where he was severely beaten for his rebellious attitude to the priests, and where he once actually fought with a priest who had made insulting remarks about Corsica after the young cadet had made his confession. But

childhood influences are far more important in this connection; and it may be said that anyone who has received Christian teaching at his mother's knee cannot put it out of his life with impunity, from the psychological point of view. Napoleon hit this nail on the head when he said: 'My intellect prevents me from believing but the impressions of my childhood and early youth bring me back to the unknown'. He said that he was always deeply moved by the sound of distant church bells. He was certainly brought up in the Catholic faith by a devout and strict mother and he appeared to turn to the Church at the end and to die a practising Catholic. Let us leave it at that for the present.

The wartime propagandists were on surer ground when they called him an inhuman monster to whom men were little more than the tools of his ambition. They could point to the cruel political murder of the young Duke of Enghien; the indiscriminate shooting of civilians, especially in Germany; and they could quote his cry about Sir John Moore's army in 1809: 'Ah that these twenty thousand were a hundred thousand that more English mothers might feel the horrors of war!'

In 1813 Napoleon played into the hands of his critics when in a notorious interview in the Marcolini Palace in Dresden he lost his temper and yelled at Metternich: 'I was brought up in the field and a man such as I am does not concern himself with the lives of a million men!' Metternich said that Napoleon actually used an extremely coarse expression; and an American general, J. Watts de Peyster, who seems to have devoted most of his time to collecting every scrap of discreditable evidence against Napoleon, supplied the dirty words and makes it *two* million men.

In his description of the astounding scene Metternich spared no effort to show Napoleon in a bad light, and himself as a calm wise statesman; but it is most likely that Napoleon was goaded to that terrible outburst by Metternich's allusions to the raw youths composing Napoleon's armies, whom he was prepared to send to their deaths rather than risk the threat to his reputation and his throne which would have resulted from an agreement to give up any part of his former conquests. He knew how weary his country was of war. So it might be unfair to attach too much significance to those terrible words on which many historians have relied in blackening Napoleon's name. But at this time in his life he often mentioned his losses in a most casual way, and he wrote to the

Empress that he had lost no one of any importance, though the casualties had amounted to thousands.

Describing the devotion of his troops Napoleon made the macabre boast that 'with the last drop of blood gushing from their veins they cried "*Vive l'Empereur*" '. He had a strange fascination for viewing the corpses of men who had been slain doing his bidding. This unpleasant obsession has been mentioned by many writers, including Tolstoi, who described it in *War and Peace*, written when survivors of 1812 must have been as numerous as our 'Old Contemptibles' are today.

A pamphlet published in Paris in 1814 – *La Conversion d'un Grand Pécheur* – purported to represent the Emperor confessing to a priest that he took pleasure in seeing men sacrificed for him. It has been said that it seemed to reinforce his sense of power; and it was first manifested quite early in his career, when he was beginning to realise what he might come to mean to France. Napoleon himself admitted to having felt a strange unnatural pleasure at the sight of the bloody corpse of Colonel Muiron, who sacrificed his life to save Napoleon's, accepting death in his place – *simplement parce que j'étais moi!*[1]

On the hideous field of Eylau even Napoleon was sufficiently shaken to exclaim: 'Awful spectacle! A sight such as this should inspire rulers with a love of peace and abhorrence of war.' But his callous nature re-asserted itself when he actually turned over with his foot the corpses of some of his soldiers remarking: 'Small change! Small change! A night of Paris will soon adjust these losses.' It was said that after Wagram he personally directed the collection of wounded, saying that after a battle there are no longer enemies, only men – the good side for once!

Sir Walter Scott, by no means a friendly critic, said that Napoleon could never bear to see suffering without displaying compassion. It may be unfair to suggest that the significant word here is 'displaying'. Napoleon was too shrewd to overlook the effect on his popularity of a display of compassion. To be fair it should be conceded that a great general must steel himself to the risk of casualties – 'He who cannot look upon a battle dry-eyed allows men to be killed needlessly', as Napoleon himself said.

But callousness is quite another matter, and for this Napoleon began towards the end to pay the price in a lessening of the loyalty of many of his generals and some of his troops. This waning of loyalty as his megalomania and disregard for men's lives became more evident was echoed in the hearts of many French-

men after the Emperor's abandonment of the survivors of the great army with which he had invaded Russia. Before leaving them, whilst watching the crossing of the Beresina, he had seen hundreds of poor creatures struggling in the icy river after the pontoon bridge had broken. All their Emperor could find to say was: '*Voyez ces crapauds.*' Few of those poor 'toads' survived to curse him, but a turning point in the devotion of his subjects was the shock of reading in his memorable Twenty Ninth Bulletin, announcing the loss of nearly half a million men, the bland assurance that the Emperor's health had never been better. 'Families dry your tears. Napoleon is well,' was Chateaubriand's bitter comment.

By this time of course he was identifying his own interests with those of France, but surely only a cold-hearted dictator could have said, as he did, that he could afford to expend a hundred thousand men a year. This condemns him out of his own mouth, and is comparable with a still more nauseous remark attributed to Mussolini, when he said to Badoglio: 'I need only a few thousand dead to ensure that I have the right to sit at the peace table in the capacity of a co-belligerent.' Napoleon's callousness may have grown with his increasing megalomania, but there is evidence of it long before he had become a dictator.

Napoleon's secretary, de Bourrienne,[2] who had known him since they were both nine years old, tells us that Napoleon's heart was naturally cold and even in his youth he was little disposed to form friendships. 'It was one of Bonaparte's greatest misfortunes not to believe in friendship or to experience the need to love. How often have I heard him say: "Friendship is only a word. I care for nobody." '

Probably it was, as he says, Napoleon's misfortune to be like that, and we ought not, perhaps, to be too hard on the man whose unfeeling nature could have been at least partly the result of being pitchforked at the age of nine, the only little Corsican and an odd little boy at that, into the rough-and-tumble of a military school, to be left there for five years with only rare family contacts. De Bourrienne was one of his closest friends at school but he was never such an intimate confidant as Caulaincourt,[3] a much more reliable witness and, unlike de Bourrienne and some others who have presumed to judge Napoleon, a man of fine character, a true and trusted friend.

Caulaincourt wrote that Napoleon often told him that 'he hardly knew what affection meant'. He said: 'It is doubtless a pity

but matters of sentiment – the heart-felt emotions, so called – have no share in my organisation.'

He went on to explain to Caulaincourt 'that for him the heart was not the organ of sentiment'; that he felt 'nothing in the heart, everything in the loins and in another place, which I shall leave nameless'; but that 'those emotions of his were never very strong.'

Napoleon was much given to this sort of self-analysis, and the best evidence about his true nature is to be obtained from his own sayings, which abundantly confirm the views of those who have described him as an unfriendly, unloving man, interested in people only if they could be of use to him; strangely unable to give or to attract true affection or love. In fact he was indeed such a man as Marshal Masséna described. Marshal Masséna, a good judge perhaps because he was himself an ambitious grasping kind of man, said that Napoleon, 'never loved anybody in his life – women, men, children – nobody but himself. He was passionate in his ambition, hard as iron in everything else.'

It was the French who were given the first taste of the latent cruelty of their future Emperor. After the first success of his military career, at the siege of Toulon, Captain Buonaparte, still very much a Corsican, mowed down large numbers of Royalists and liberated convicts herded into the great square of Toulon. The young artillery commander then announced loudly that the vengeance of the French Republic was satisfied, and they should now rise and go to their homes. They did so, and received another withering blast of artillery. Two years later when the Convention needed a ruthless soldier to suppress the Royalist rising of Vendémiare they knew to whom they could look for a whiff of grapeshot in the streets of Paris itself. Some three and a half years after this second helping of hors d'oeuvres for purely French consumption, the world had its first chance of sampling the sort of fare it could expect from this man whose name was beginning to sound so ominously in its ears.

The Syrian campaign of 1799 marred Bonaparte's growing military reputation with its first indelible stain, proving that the young general was as ruthless, cold-hearted, and careless of human life as the middle-aged dictator was to be. The name of Jaffa remained in his memory to the end of his days as the scene of two incidents to which he occasionally referred in specious attempts to justify his actions.

Of course it was embarrassing for him to have thousands of

Turkish prisoners on his hands during his bold invasion of Syria, of which Palestine was then a part. But no arguments based on military expediency can absolve him of the shame of having had some five thousand prisoners of war butchered in batches on the beach. Before the bloody business was done he had ordered that, to save ammunition, the bayonet was to be used. He had great difficulty in finding an officer to carry out these executions. Humane French observers of the ghastly scene were appalled, and apprehensive of the condemnation and possible retribution which they feared would be the punishment of a nation guilty of such inhumanity.

The massacre of prisoners could never be anything but wrong,[4] but historians have not found it so easy to determine the rights and wrongs of the poisoning at Jaffa of his own French soldiers who were gravely ill with plague. Bonapartists have justified it as 'mercy-killing'. When trying to persuade Dr Desgenettes to co-operate in carrying out the sad task, Napoleon said that if he were dying of plague a merciful overdose of opium would be his dearest wish. Doctors may feel proud of Desgenettes for saying, at risk of his career, that his mission was to save life, not to destroy it. He knew that some of his patients might survive, as some of them did even after being given the lethal drug, which led to the belief that some of the pharmacists who administered it deliberately reduced the dose. At the time Napoleon tried to make light of the incident, saying that after all the opium had saved some forty men from their sufferings, and the army from their plaints; but later he preferred to claim that he had intended only to leave the opium available for use by the sufferers if capture by Arabs or Turks was imminent.

Even if this was his true motive the real charge against him is that he was ready to sacrifice these patients and many of his wounded soldiers to save his own military reputation in the eyes of the world. He could have obtained from Admiral Sir Sidney Smith a safe-conduct, and even help in the evacuation of his casualties by sea; but, rather than admit the straits to which he was reduced and risk censure by the Directory, he preferred to abandon wounded men along the line of his retreat and poison the sick.

That he considered his own reputation before the welfare of his troops did not go unnoticed in the army of Egypt, but he was soon to forsake them all and return to France. By the time the survivors reached their homeland Napoleon had led fresh troops to

victory after victory and the Napoleonic Legend was growing ever stronger.

Napoleon's claim to have abolished flogging in the French army cannot really be set against the imputation of cruelty without some qualification, because it was mainly due to his enlightened views on the importance of the soldier's morale and the part which self-respect could play in this. Had it been humanity which prompted Napoleon he would surely also have forbidden the cruel floggings of subject populations. De Bourrienne wrote about the floggings which were ordered for the citizens of Hamburg whom Napoleon was determined to ruin because of their friendship for England. All who did not leave the town for exile within the prescribed time received fifty blows with the cane, and Bourrienne adds with comical naivety that 'French gallantry substituted with respect to females the birch for the cane.'

In any case it was not really Napoleon who abolished flogging in the army. The truth, and a very unpalatable truth it is for us, is that flogging naturally disappeared in the French army in which it was as impossible to continue it as it seemed to be to do away with it in our own army.[5]

Curiously enough Napoleon allowed in his army various degrading and even cruel forms of punishment, against which Wellington set his face. When his own safety or reputation were at stake he could be far more ruthless than any general in our army.

Whilst still General Bonaparte he pushed a certain Captain Fournois with his cane making a rude remark about his gait. Fournois struck Bonaparte's cane with his sword and seemed about to attack him. However he stabbed himself. Bonaparte then disarmed his whole company, which had set up a 'general murmur'; and ordered that every tenth man was to be shot next day; 'but Bonaparte pardoned them upon condition of serving for life in the colonies.'

Napoleon's cold unfeeling nature grew from the contempt for all his fellow-creatures which he expressed many times. We may well forgive the fallen Emperor, as he heard stones cast by Frenchmen rattling on the coach taking him on his way to Elba, for the bitter comment that he had been right to despise mankind. But even when not under stress he had often averred that he had never really loved anybody, and a crowning, damning confession made to General Gourgaud[6] who was with him in St Helena was: 'I only care for people who are useful to me – and so long as they are useful.' Claude Manceron does not conceal the coarse language

habitually used by Napoleon; he tells us that Napoleon used to say: 'When I need someone I am not too fastidious; I would kiss his arse if necessary.'

In textbooks of abnormal psychology claims to hate everybody, to love nobody, tend to recur in the case histories of victims of sexual perversions. Nowadays no one is likely to doubt that cruelty in its many forms sends its roots deep down into our sexual instincts. Napoleon's sadism must be discussed further, when exploring his sexual inclinations.

To attempt a detailed assessment of Napoleon as a general is outside the scope of this book, except in so far as his personality is concerned. His reputation rests securely on the brilliance and massive sweep of his early campaigns, his many victories and his inspired defence of France in 1814. He had an unsurpassed eye for country, the ability to make quick decisions, and gifts of leadership which ensured that his plans would be loyally carried out by subordinates whom he knew how to choose and to bend to his will. He could read the minds of enemy generals and divine what was going on 'on the other side of the hill.'

His greatest weakness stemmed from the defects in his character, his basic inhumanity and cold unloving nature. Posterity would learn how little he really cared for his soldiers whose adoration he cultivated. No general who cared for his men should have earned this verdict from the celebrated historian of the British Army, Sir John Fortescue:

> In spite of many effusive orders and utterances Napoleon took no care of his soldiers. He did not pay them; he did not feed them; he did not clothe them; he made no sufficient provision for the sick and wounded, and his hospitals were a disgrace to his name. The inevitable result was that his losses were gigantic. It is too often forgotten by the panegyrists of Napoleon that he was the most wasteful of commanders and that a long war was consequently to him a fatal war.

Here is the great general's Achilles' heel – logistics; the science of moving, quartering and supplying troops, and providing for their medical care. In the 'moving' part of it he excelled, but for the rest he made no bones about it. The army must live and support itself, and France and the rapacious Buonaparte clan, by plunder. A good revolutionary principle perhaps, and one approved by

Carnot, but hardly worthy of the army of the all-conquering Emperor. If the conquered countries paid a heavy price, so in the end did the French army. The fewer the supply wagons the faster the armies could move, but this bonus was lost when supplies were hard to find, and foraging parties, ranging far afield, delayed the start of a day's march. Worse still was the hostility aroused in the local populations by the foraging, plundering soldiery.

It was not 'General Winter' who defeated Napoleon in 1812, as he always claimed. Before the Grand Army had even crossed the Russian frontier it had begun to dwindle from sickness, bad management and desertions, as Napoleon's unwilling allies stealthily abandoned his ill-nourished eagles. It is now known that the winter of 1812 was not exceptionally severe, but no normal precautions, such as warm clothing, had been taken against its onset. The ill-discipline resulting from this neglect made a disproportionately large contribution to the devastating losses.

Military critics have pointed to many mistakes which could have damaged his reputation but for the cast-iron system which ensured that his successes were magnified, and his failures attributed to others. His mistrust of others led to his disastrous mistake of trying to run the Spanish campaign from Central Europe. His capacity for self-deception and ability to confuse assumptions with facts were weaknesses for which he would have paid a stiffer price but for exceptional luck. No wonder his first question about a general was 'Is he lucky?' Many of the generals against whom he fought when his own genius was blazing most brightly were of poor quality. Elderly gentlemen, still wedded to the stately pavane of position warfare, of which the great object was to avoid casualties, they were mentally unprepared for the onslaught of the fierce Corsican, knife in hand.

Wellington hit the nail on the head when he said: 'I suspect all the Continental armies are half beaten before the battle begins. I at least will not be frightened beforehand'. He never underestimated Napoleon and said that 'his presence on the field made a difference of forty thousand men.' But he knew that 'Boney' was not 'an officer and a gentleman'; and said: 'Bonaparte's mind is in all its details low and ungentleman-like. I never believed in him; I always called him Jonathan Wild the Great'; adding, in a sentence worthy of Sir Winston Churchill: 'Scarcely ever has he tripped into truth.'[7]

What did Napoleon care for the opinion of aristocrats like the Duke? More, I believe, than he admitted, although even in 1813 he

could refer to himself as 'an upstart general' who could not risk defeat, whereas hereditary monarchs could always keep their thrones despite disasters. The role of an upstart cocking snooks at the crowned heads suited the leader of men inherited from the fine Revolutionary Army. Even whilst intent upon creating his bogus 'instant aristocracy', and winning the support of the old nobility, he could play the 'Little Corporal', wandering round the camp-fires gossiping with his old *grognards*, playing to the gallery with such well-publicised incidents as the story, possibly apocryphal, of how, instead of having a sleeping sentry shot, he took up the fallen musket and completed the tired man's tour of duty. His sword was his patent of nobility, and he could shrug off Wellington's little joke, in public at any rate. His private feelings are probed in Chapter 3.

Napoleon's own verdict on his military genius was this:

> If I appear always prepared it is because before entering on an undertaking I have meditated for long and have foreseen what may occur. It is not genius which reveals to me suddenly and secretly what I have to do in circumstances unexpected by other people; it is reflection, it is meditation.

His meditation was based on a very wide range of reading, and he filled many notebooks with comments on what he read. These notebooks have been analysed in attempts to penetrate the secrets of his mind. His comments are of a surprisingly superficial nature, and reveal an abnormal preoccupation with cruelty, massacres and so on. When Napoleon urged his officers to read and read again the stories of the great captains he presumably hoped that they would learn what made them leaders of men. There is no evidence that he sought such guidance for himself. His own leadership was an expression of his self-confidence and conviction of his own superiority over mankind. Mankind has reacted to this, and hostile hands have sought to drag him from his pedestal.

It has even been suggested that he lacked that essential quality in a soldier – courage. This must be unjust. In his day it was not possible for a man to become a military leader without being brave, and being seen to be brave. In the close fighting involved in many engagements the soldiers had ample opportunities for judging this. Napoleon was often under fire and there is no reason to suppose that his coolness was any less marked than Wellington's, which was proverbial.

Napoleon often spoke of his personal attributes, but, like any

good soldier, he never boasted about his physical courage. He did however, claim to have 'two o'clock in the morning courage' – moral courage which helped him to deal with unexpected situations and to appear calm and confident even if racked by tormenting doubts.

It has been unkindly suggested that he broke off his personal pursuit of Sir John Moore (whom he did the honour of regarding as the only foeman worthy of his steel) because he was afraid of assassination by Spanish guerillas. This is hard to accept in view of his fiery leadership in pushing forward over the Guadarrama at Somo Sierra, overriding the leading general who thought it impossible to cross the pass. It is more likely that he realized that Moore, outnumbered as he was, no longer needed his personal attention.

The last word about Napoleon's courage has not been said until we have considered his lifelong fear of hostile mobs, of which the two best-known examples occurred near the beginning and near the end of his career. Early in his rise to power, when he briefly trod the tightrope between the throne and the scaffold, during the *Coup de Brumaire*[8] in 1799, he cowered and fell beneath the jostling and blows of outraged deputies, and completely lost his nerve.

In 1814, after his first abdication, during his journey to Elba accompanied by the Allied Commissioners, he plumbed the depths of degradation. Slighted by senior officers, notably by General Augereau who insulted him and refused to take off his hat, Napoleon was surrounded by hostile mobs of war-weary Frenchmen, and more terrible, hysterical Frenchwomen mourning lost sons, yelling abuse and throwing stones. The worst scenes were at Orgon where he saw himself hanged in effigy.

Cowering back in his coach, shouting '*Vive le Roi*' at the command of a peasant named Durel, he was soon shaking and sobbing. A few miles further on he left his carriage and disguised himself as a postilion.

After changing horses at Calade he dressed himself in a grotesque mixture of Prussian, Russian and Austrian uniforms, and when his sister Pauline met him in this disguise she refused to kiss him until he had put on his own clothes. Neither of them ever forgot his humiliation, and it was thought that it was Pauline, as much as his own bitter memories, who nagged him to abandon his life of a country squire and make a last attempt to restore the power and wealth of the Bonapartes.

Some writers have taken his fear of mobs to be a sign of underlying cowardice. But I fancy that few men in his place would not have quailed before 'King Mob'. In his case the motive of self-preservation was particularly compelling. With his belief in his great destiny he could not tolerate the thought of his Star setting in squalor. He had to survive to complete the story, to stake his claim for a place in history, to create his legend.

Could his craven fear and poor showing in adversity have owed anything to a mood of depression following his well-publicised attempt at suicide? Was he in fact a suicidal type? I think not. The story is well-known of how, after some hours of melancholy brooding, staring into space, he took poison. The attempt was thought to have failed because the poison, given to him some years before by Dr Cabanis, had lost its potency and only made him ill. Those who cannot believe that he attempted suicide may be right. The attack of vomiting which ended the incident could have been one of the psychosomatic upsets to which he was notoriously subject when things were not going well.

It is a known fact that from about 1812 he was always prepared for suicide, being provided with poison by Doctors Yvan, Cabanis, and Corvisart. It was the duty of his *premier valet-de-chambre* to see that the poison in a small leather sachet was always about his person. But many people who could not be called suicidal types have taken similar precautions against capture in wartime, and Napoleon, like the Nazi leaders, knew what to expect from some of his enemies. He may have joked with Caulaincourt as he left Russia in a sleigh in 1812 about the possibility of capture and exhibition in a cage; but he was not a man to contemplate humiliation.

I do not think that he was a suicidal type, even if he did tell Montholon that he had seriously contemplated suicide in Paris shortly after the Siege of Toulon. He was stopped, he said, from throwing himself into the river by a chance meeting with Alexandre des Mazis, a former schoolfriend and brother officer in his artillery regiment. But the penniless young captain in the political jungle of Paris in 1793 was a very different man to the fallen Emperor in 1814, who had already shown his ability to survive disaster, and was to do so yet once more. He did not need to stage a half-hearted attempt at suicide to attract sympathy, and if in a moment of depression he did make a serious attempt it seems that he soon regretted it and did not care to speak of it. It revealed a crack in his armour of self-sufficiency.

Napoleon was generous with money to his wives, relatives and protegés, especially to those whose support he wanted. He could afford to be generous. Henri Guillemin has mercilessly exposed how he pillaged Europe, and France herself, for the benefit of the Buonapartes. But he was much less generous in more important things. It is all too easy to detect in his character traits of meanness, selfishness, jealousy, and above all egotism from which these other blemishes grew. There must be only one great man in France. From the first he showed an amazing flair for publicity, and saw to it that all successes were attributed to him and to him alone. He disliked and was jealous of successful generals, especially those whose reputation challenged his own.

He never admitted that he was wrong and had to throw the blame on others when things went wrong. His faithful chief of staff, Berthier, whom he ungenerously called a goose whom he had made an eagle, was often the whipping-boy; and once even had to take the blame when Napoleon peppered another 'gun' at a shooting party – it was Masséna, who lost an eye as a result of Napoleon's bad shooting.

To Napoleon, the opportunist soldier of fortune, abstractions like duty, right and wrong, meant little or nothing. His watchword was expediency. 'What do I care for a base action if it leads to success?' he demanded. He was a great realist with a deep insight into psychology, but his own egotism was so powerful that he could not imagine any other motive governing a man's life. For example, he simply could not understand the idealism of the young German, Staps, who tried to shoot him. He wanted to spare Staps, and could not believe that he was unable to give up his ideals even to save his life. Goethe said that 'Napoleon who lived wholly for ideas was nevertheless unable to grasp the nature of ideal motives'.

With his great flair for leadership he could almost compel people to believe themselves capable of great achievements; but it is a fair, though severe, judgement on Napoleon that he was best at understanding men's weaknesses and exploiting these in his own interests.

He lacked a sense of humour. Talleyrand called him 'The Unamusable'. Laure Junot (later Duchess of Abrantes) who had known him since she was a child and he a young officer, said that he was seldom roused to mirth, and his laughter had 'the disconcerting sound of a ventriloquist's dummy'. Even at second hand his laughter has a hard a cruel ring, and was far too often at

the expense of people who could not answer back. It often took the form of rudeness to women, including his wives, from which it is fair to make some deductions about his sexual leanings, therefore, in examining these, his 'disconcerting' laughter, and *schadenfreude*, or pleasure in another's misfortunes, will be referred to again.

In all his endless talk, his pronouncements intended to impress and improve mankind, humour or wit found no place. One witty remark is often quoted. When his sisters were dissatisfied with their share of titles and precedence during discussions about his forthcoming coronation, he closed the argument by saying: 'To hear you talk one would think that I had robbed you of the heritage of the late King, our father.'

Most dictators tend to be the subjects of surreptitious jokes, and one about Napoleon represented him as replying to an enquiry if he intended to go on and on until he took the seat of the Almighty, with the remark that this would not attract him as it was a dead-end job. Perhaps Napoleon could not afford a sense of humour, which was described by Mr Eric Linklater, in a televised interview, as 'an enormous handicap if you are avid for power.'

Napoleon seems to have been fond of children and many of them were very fond of him. But, apart from some examples of actual cruelty which will be mentioned in discussing his sadism, there was something a little strange, even cruel in his attitude to children. It amused him to accuse falsely a little niece of wetting her bed; to hide Betsy Balcombe's first party dress, letting this little friend of his early days in St Helena cry herself to sleep. It also amused him, amongst other silly tricks, to smear jam or gravy over the face of his baby son, to push him over and scatter his toys.

A devoted father he certainly was, and we see him in his most completely happy and human moods with this child for whom he had waited so long, and from whom he was soon to be parted for ever. But he once contrived to sully even this cherished relationship. During his campaign for France in 1814 the Empress sent him a portrait of the child saying his prayers. Napoleon, whose sense of public relations, in their more nauseating as well as their reasonably tolerable aspects, was ahead of his time, immediately sent the portrait back, and ordered his wife to have it engraved with the caption 'I am praying to God to save my father and France', and to have it on sale in Paris within forty-eight hours. Marie Louise

was not his wife for nothing, and she suggested that it would please the public if the little king was depicted in the uniform of the National Guard.

Those for whom kindness to animals excuses almost any depravity may care to give a point to Napoleon for his tolerance of Josephine's horrid little pug, Fortuné, though it bit his leg as he clambered into the marriage bed. But his letters make it plain that it was a case of 'Love Josephine – love her dog'; and this was confirmed by his attitude to a gardener's dog, whose owner was surprised by Napoleon's forebearance about the damage it did in the garden, until Napoleon said slyly that perhaps the mongrel might rid him of 'that other'.

As for horses, it seems that he regarded them purely as means of transportation, and riding as a good remedy for liver trouble. With his rather short plump thighs he was an ungainly horseman.

It might be thought that of all aspects of Napoleon's character his ruthless ambition and lust for conquest could be accepted without argument; but many have believed that his assertions that he desired peace and was not interested in further conquests were sincere, unlike similar pronouncements by Hitler, and that he was borne along on the irresistible flood of aggression by his inability to accept the pre-Revolutionary frontiers of France, leaving the country worse off than it had been when he came to power. It is hard to reconcile his claims to a benevolent wish to unite Europe with his insistence on what he regarded as the natural frontiers of France. These included Holland, and he said that he would rather sink Holland in the sea than give it up. His true voice rang out during a State Council, when he cried: 'People are speaking of peace. I hear nothing but the word peace, when everything should resound with shouts of war.'

His threats that if he were brought down he would bury Europe beneath the ruins of his throne were echoed by Hitler. But Hitler really intended to make Europe drain the cup of bitterness to the dregs, and finally almost welcomed *Götterdämmerung* – the German people had shown themselves to be weak and unworthy of the great destiny he had planned for them, and they deserved to perish. The Corsican upstart, a shade less ruthless than the Austrian corporal, may have despised the French but hesitated to plunge them into civil war. A monster perhaps, but not so foul a monster as Hitler, who gloated over the filmed dying moments of generals whom in sadistic frenzy he had caused to be publicly garotted for plotting against him.

Historians continue to be divided as to whether Napoleon really was impelled by the grand design of a United Europe, or whether he invented these grandiose theories whilst in St Helena in order to justify his career. He claimed that his ambition was 'of the highest and noblest kind that ever perhaps existed – that of establishing and consecrating the Empire of reason, and of the full exercise and enjoyment of all human faculties'. Some students of politics believe that the balance of power would have been better secured had Napoleon beaten the Russians, and that his mistakes, and the self-interest of the Allies who brought him down in 1814, led to the two World Wars and the Cold War which followed them.

Napoleon probably was genuinely sick of war, especially after the marked physical and mental change which came over him at about the age of thirty-five. He was gifted with political foresight, and may have hoped that he would really win that illusory 'war to end wars', for he wrote: 'War will become an anachronism – the future belongs to peace; a time will come when victories will be won without guns or bayonets!' If we can accept these striking words as forecasting the Cold War we can chalk up to Napoleon another successful prophecy; but having done so I must record at least one bad shot. He assured Las Cases that England was bound to fall under French dominion, being 'by nature intended to be one of our islands'. Common Marketeers beware!

Whatever view may be taken about Napoleon's true aims for Europe and his political foresight this analysis of his character has revealed a hard-hearted, inordinately ambitious callous egotist, who was little moved by the sacrifice of millions of men to his megalomania, and even seemed to derive some reinforcement of his sense of power by viewing the bodies of men who had died doing his bidding. Unchristian, even in many Frenchmen's eyes sacriligious, he seemed to put himself above God, in his supreme self-confidence and his contempt for mankind. 'My mistress is Power,' he told Roederer, who said that Napoleon loved power as a musician loves his violin. What made the French follow him, and respond to his increasingly insatiable demands? What was the secret of his power over the minds of those who were to him the instruments of his ambition, whom he secretly despised?

No doubt many thinking men, many aristocrats who accepted state appointments, served him because he was inevitable. Even if it was military power which enabled him to say like Louis XIV, *L'état c'est moi*, it was soon obvious that he was much more than a mere soldier. His astonishing flair for organisation, for getting the

right men to carry out his ideas, and his efficiency impressed them and enabled them to hope that his lust for conquest might be satiated, and that he would in the end be good for France. Such hopes must have driven many Germans to serve Hitler, though his noisy vulgarity and sadistic excesses were repugnant to them. But, as well as the intellectual qualities which impressed the intelligentsia, Napoleon possessed a gift which weighed even more heavily with them and with the common people as well – what today is called personal magnetism. Even before he rose to fame it was noticed that he was the centre of attraction in almost any company. Among the contradictions in his character one fact is unchallenged – his ability to fascinate people.

Many descriptions of Napoleon's appearance were left for us by those who knew him at various stages of his career. Claude Manceron, bold enough to paint the national hero 'warts and all', has described Napoleon's face at one period as a 'bloated . . . suet mask', which was once compared to a 'boiled calf's head'. It looked better in profile when the three chins were less obvious. There are plenty of unflattering descriptions from the odd-looking, farouche unkempt young subaltern to the fat vulgar-looking little man of later years; but few omitted to mention the unusual quality of his face.

There is in fact fairly general agreement among men and women alike that there was a classic nobility in his features. Surely all the many portraits which bear this out were not painted by flatterers. His death mask shows that the mental and physical suffering of his last years had not erased the serene dignity of his face in repose, which was said to be still discernible nearly twenty years later, when his coffin was opened before his body was taken to France for re-burial. The classic beauty of his face was enhanced by his pallor upon which most observers commented, some seeing in it the glow of ancient marble, whilst others saw in the pale olive complexion a suggestion of ill-health. To some English visitors it was 'a very rare complexion we've never seen before'.

There was some strange quality about his eyes – a fixed motionless and unblinking stare. One of the many who remarked upon this was the German poet Heine, who spoke of the power of Napoleon's eyes. Some found his cold intense gaze disquieting, and as his expression was often rigid and stern, his rare smile was a welcome relief. Cam Hobhouse, the English traveller and diarist, saw him early in the Hundred Days and described his 'lips thin, but partially curled, so as to give his mouth an inexpressible

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sweetness'. Mrs Abell, who as Betsy Balcombe was one of his earliest friends in St Helena, wrote that 'his smile and the expression of his eye could not be transmitted to canvas, and these constituted Napoleon's chief charm'.

But the true secret of his charm was the trouble which he took to bring it to bear on those whom he meant to enslave. He could be compellingly, irresistibly charming, and many of those who fell under his spell, when he chose to play the charmer, tried to analyse and explain his almost hypnotic power to bewitch those whose allegiance or affection he wanted to win. It was in fact studied play-acting, and no man has ever been more thorough in this as in everything that he did. He studied every aspect of any subject which interested him and brought all his great powers to bear on the matter in hand.

The protean quality of his nature, and the fact that so many different sides to it were seen by different people, can be largely attributed to this love of play-acting. He was intensely interested in the theatre, and numbered many actors and actresses among his friends, and he did not drop them when he became Emperor. He deliberately studied how to play his part as Emperor with his friend Talma, the great actor, yet he wore the imperial trappings without true grace or distinction – a parvenu. Eyebrows were raised when during the coronation ceremony he attracted the attention of Cardinal Fesch with a prod in the ribs with his sceptre. But this could just have been more of his play-acting – the rôle this time of the rough soldier to whom all this mummery really meant very little. He was almost invariably to be seen in very simple uniform, and in this he showed wisdom for it suited him to perfection.

Two good examples of his profitable use of his sense of the theatre occurred in 1814; the first when he solemnly entrusted the care of his wife and little son to his soldiers on parade, and swept many waverers back into his camp before departing for his campaign to save France. The second was the emotional farewell at Fontainebleau, when he embraced the commander of the Guard and then the eagles, and, adjuring the soldiers never to forget the glory they had won together, carefully set the scene for his equally theatrical return.

The Royalist writer, Alfred de Vigny, in his penetrating evocation of an interview between the Emperor and Pope Pius VII at Fontainebleau, puts into the mouth of the gentle old Pope a concise two-word diagnosis of this theatrical side of Napoleon's

nature. After a show of bluster has failed to overawe the Pope, who merely murmurs '*Commediante*', Napoleon switches to pathos, and tries to throw a rosy glow upon his lofty ambitions for France and for the world, which evil men had so wickedly frustrated, only to grow angry again at the Pope's comment on his new rôle – '*Tragediante*!'[9]

As a practical psychologist Napoleon knew that to influence people he must give them a sense of their own importance to him, and although people meant little to him except in so far as he could use them for his own ends, he could make the person whom he was mesmerising believe that the great man was genuinely interested in every detail of his life and interests; though the great man often did not wait for answers to the machine-gun rattle of his questions. General Gourgaud said that he was a really fine master to serve, and never failed to give people credit for such talents as they possessed, and often imputed to them good qualities which in fact they lacked. 'Men as well as pictures require to be placed in a favourable light,' said Napoleon.

General Count Caulaincourt was one of his closest associates and his frank memoirs give us a reliable insight into his personality. He wrote: 'He had, when he wanted, something seductive, persuasive, in his voice and manner . . . no man ever had more charm.' When he wanted. De Ségur, another companion of the Russian campaign, also spoke of seduction, and saw it as a feminine faculty:

> When he wanted to seduce his manner was one of ineffable charm, a kind of magnetic power. The person he wishes to attract seems to become beside himself. In these moments of sublime power he no longer commands like a man but seduces like a woman.

Boris Sokoloff in *A Doctor's Biography* quotes several people who had themselves experienced this magnetic power of Napoleon's charm, which was admitted even by that shrewd surgeon Baron Larrey. Whatever the nature of this gift he used it on many occasions to enslave those upon whom, for the time being, his comfort or interests depended. Having seen how easily he bewitched the ships' companies of His Majesty's Ships *Undaunted*[10] and *Bellerophon*, though a captive, he really believed that he would be welcomed in England, given the Garter, and allowed to end his days there as a popular and respected country

gentleman – even perhaps being buried in Westminister Abbey. His banishment to St Helena was a profound shock, and so threw him off balance that he later not only failed to charm but instantly antagonised the man on whom his well-being ultimately depended, the Governor, Sir Hudson Lowe.

Napoleon's methods of winning the adoration of his soldiers give us the clearest evidence that he made a deliberate study of the art of influencing men. He was intensely proud of the veneration which he inspired in the French Army, and often spoke about it, saying that he had taught men to die. He could say to them, 'Frenchmen! I need your lives. You must give them to me!' He often stressed the importance to a military leader of the use of words, and he gave a wonderful demonstration of his own methods to the British Commissioner in Elba, Colonel Sir Neil Campbell, who wrote an illuminating account of this theatrical performance.

> Enlarging for some time upon the influence which he possessed over the minds of French soldiers in the field, he said that under him they performed what no other chief could obtain from them. This he ascribed to his manner of talking to them on particular occasions. With soldiers it is not so much the speech itself as the mode of delivering it. Here he raised himself on his toes, looked up to the ceiling, and lifting one of his hands to the utmost extent, called out: '*Déployez les aigles*! *Déployez les aigles*!' He then related to me that when the battle of Marengo was almost lost he redeemed it by calling out to the men who were then in perfect rout. He had then with himself only about forty horsemen; but by putting himself at the head of the retiring troops and speaking to them in a certain manner, they rallied immediately, crying out '*Allons donc – en avant*.' It is like music which either speaks to the soul or, on the contrary gives out sounds without harmony.

This was not the only occasion on which Napoleon compared his words to music which speaks to the soul, and he said: 'You must speak to the soul in order to electrify the man.'

But alas, this stupendous scene was wasted on Colonel Campbell, who summed it all up with the dry comment: 'It strikes me there was something *wild* in his air throughout this last visit, and in many of his observations, the above among others.'

Stage management played an essential part in his famous gift for recognising soldiers on parade. One of his generals, usually Lobau, prepared a list of men who were to be called out, showing details of their services and their exact place on parade. Napoleon stopped opposite them and called out their names; they stepped forward swelling with pride and the impression was made. But confusion reigned when the drill went wrong.

Some of Napoleon's other tricks led to ridiculous scenes. He would ask for the name of the bravest man on parade, and provided with a name almost at random, would decorate or promote the man on the spot. Sometimes another would protest that he was really much braver, commanding officers would become confused and the Emperor would storm and rant at them, for he was much addicted to abusing senior officers in front of their troops, a habit unworthy of a general.

Some of the scenes are well-nigh incredible. One of the worst was at Valladolid where on parade he hysterically abused General Legendre, who had been chief of staff to General Dupont when he capitulated at Baylen.[11] This had been the first chink in the armed might of Napoleon's France and to him it was an unbearable memory. General Thiébault's eye-witness account of the astounding scene is in a recent book *Napoleon in his Time*, by Jean Savant, who becomes one of the most severe critics by the simple process of letting Napoleon's contemporaries relate their experiences and opinions of him. Some of his admirers thus became his worst denigrators, and descriptions of Napoleon's sudden uncontrolled rages abound in this and in many other books.

Those fine calm features could become evil, contorted with fury, and the whole man could become so terrifyingly malignant that admirers who had come to worship left the presence scared, disillusioned, and aware of having been in contact with something evil. A great Englishman, Sir Stamford Raffles, who visited Napoleon in St Helena, went there full of admiration for a great man and sympathy for his present state. He was subjected to no special rudeness, yet he came away with feelings of 'horror, disgust and alarm'. He wrote a twenty-five page letter to his friend Alexander Hare in Borneo, describing a typical Napoleonic interview, with the usual salvo of questions, but did not mince his words in recording his impressions of 'this extraordinary character, certainly the greatest man of his age'.

> Believe me, Hare, this man is a monster, that he has none of those feelings of the heart which constitute the real man . . . I saw in him a man, determined and vindictive, without one spark of soul, but possessing a capacity and talent calculated to enslave mankind . . . He is in short all head and no heart – a man who may by his ability command respect but by his conduct can never ensure the affection of anyone.*

This was the impression left with a man of undoubted intellect and knowledge of men, who, I repeat, went to his interview with Napoleon in a spirit of admiration and sympathy. Clearly Napoleon was not trying that day. There was no longer much point in trying to charm anyone except those on whom he depended; and the story of how, in St Helena, he played the members of his household against each other, keeping them bound to him not only by devotion but by hopes of ultimate gain, is a depressingly sordid end to the great epic.

But now, such is the maddening perplexity of trying to get at the truth of this many-sided enigma, it is fair to record the experience of another visitor to Longwood House – a Scots naval captain, Basil Hall, who saw Napoleon in 1817. Hall's father, ten years older than Napoleon, had been with him at the military school in Brienne, and the Emperor had remembered him all his life, as he told his son, because he had been the first Englishman he had ever met. Perhaps for that reason Basil Hall was given a long and friendly interview, with the old Napoleonic magnetism switched full on. Apart from a 'momentary fit of scorn' when Hall convinced him that the inhabitants of the Island of Loo Choo had really never had any wars, Bonaparte was in excellent humour, and even when the captain forgot himself and became too familiar, he was soon put at his ease.

The 'brilliant and sometimes dazzling expression of his eye could not be overlooked', but it was seen only when his interest was aroused. The visitor found it 'impossible to imagine an expression of more extreme mildness than that which played over his features during the whole interview'. The observant naval officer was perhaps a little adrift when he thought that Napoleon displayed every sign of 'perfect health and a mind at ease'; but he made one observation of significance to a clinician which will be mentioned in its proper place. Napoleon seemed genuinely

* The letter is printed in full in *Raffles of the Eastern Isles*, by Charles Wurtzburg. Hodder & Stoughton, 1954.

interested to hear that his old acquaintance was now President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and quizzed his son as to whether he contributed to the sometimes controversial *Edinburgh Review*. Clearly Napoleon *was* trying that day, and exuded charm.

Charm was not the only weapon which he used to gain his ends, if his violent outbursts of rage were sometimes feigned in order to scare adversaries into submission. It was noticed that the more violent his tempers the quicker they subsided, to be succeeded by calm. This, together with his reputation for self-control and his penchant for theatricality, led to the belief that his tempers were sometimes staged for effect. He certainly liked to make sure of a good audience for some of his scenes, as he did for one of the more obviously staged exhibitions – the stormy scene with the British Ambassador Lord Whitworth in 1803. Napoleon had decided to end the uneasy peace which followed the Treaty of Amiens 1802; and tried to provoke Lord Whitworth into appearing to play the part of the aggressor. In this familiar gambit exploited by more than one dictator he gave a performance worthy of Hitler with 'his patience exhausted'.

But many years later, after his stormy quarrel with Hudson Lowe in St Helena, he said to Gourgaud: 'That is the second time in my life I have made a mess of things with the English. Their complacency is more than I can stand and I say more than I should'. So, after all, the historians who have assumed that the momentous attack on Lord Whitworth was planned beforehand may be wrong. Perhaps Napoleon's self-control really did fail him, and for a reason with which, dare we confess it? – many non-English readers, including Scotsmen, may secretly sympathise.

If Napoleon's occasional rough treatment of senior officers was inspired by the spirit of Voltaire's remark that the English found it a good thing to kill an admiral from time to time to encourage the others, then it was 'bad psychology', and certainly failed to have that effect.

Count de Ségur described a violent tirade directed at Winzingerode, a captured German general serving with the Russians, who, as a German, was regarded by Napoleon as one of his subjects and therefore a traitor. He ended by bawling: 'Guards, lay hold of that man!' But the guards did nothing, behaving like men who were accustomed to seeing such violent scenes come to nothing. As de Ségur tells the tale one can almost hear the soldiers saying 'The old man's in another of his tempers'.

Surely he must have realized that scenes such as this, and that

one on parade at Valladolid, when he screamed shrill abuse at a defenceless general, and the wrong one at that, lowered him in the eyes of soldiers. His image was further tarnished by his habit of using foul and incredibly vulgar language to all ranks. Had he just wanted to assume an appearance of anger he would hardly have intended to let it go so far beyond what was needed to overawe and impress, and to overflow in a way which lessened the dignity which was so important to him. So I believe that there was nothing feigned about most of his notorious outbursts of rage and wicked tantrums, which were violent and unpredictable. They had so often culminated in actual assaults on inoffensive people that some statesmen and courtiers were so afraid of him that they confessed to feeling physically ill before an interview with the Emperor. Hateful it may be to compare this great historical figure with Hitler, but here and there it is hard to avoid.

From a pamphlet *Anecdotes sur la Cour et l'Interieur de la famille de Napoléon Bonaparte* published anonymously in Paris in 1818, we learn that in the climax of his tempers he sometimes rolled on the floor, like a demented man, *privé de raison.*

Making due allowance for war propaganda we are still left with enough reliable contemporary evidence to justify the conclusion that there were many disgraceful exhibitions which could only blacken the name of a great man. In fact, no one regretted them more than Napoleon himself. He often said that those who disregarded the wild and often cruel orders which he gave at such times served him best. Duroc, his most intimate and faithful friend, often assumed the function of tempering the wind of his master's passion. We know that Napoleon could appear calm, confident and unconcerned in moments of stress, and the reaction from such iron self-control may have triggered off some of the outbursts which sullied his reputation. But these uncontrollable rages, and I would emphasise that they were sometimes wildly uninhibited and quite beyond the range of normal fits of temper, must be regarded as evidence of an unbalanced mentality.

Not even his bitterest calumniators have ever hinted that his strange moods and violent behaviour were caused by alcohol. Whatever some brandy advertisements might seem to imply Napoleon hardly ever touched the stuff. His Mameluke Roustam carried a small silver flask of brandy, of which, his valet Constant assures us, Napoleon seldom or never made use. Half a bottle of Chambertin, usually diluted with water, was his daily ration. A man who strove so assiduously to be a true Frenchman could

hardly have taken less. After his surrender to the British he was content with claret, but tended to drink a little more of it.

A man like Napoleon, hardly ever still, hardly ever doing nothing, thinking, talking, dictating even in his bath, needed no stimulants but would have been a candidate for the tranquillisers so excessively used in our neurotic age. Dalliance and trivial conversation with his bird-brained Josephine helped him; and after his relaxing hot baths he liked to be rubbed all over with eau-de-cologne by one of his valets.

His only attempt at smoking, when he tried a hookah given to him by the Turkish ambassador, was not a success and the experiment was never repeated. I do not know whether he objected to other people smoking, but would guess that he did, because he was hypersensitive to bad smells, and claimed to be able to detect a smell even if it came from a distant cellar, underground passage or sewer.

He was a compulsive and untidy snuff-taker, and was believed to have kept the snuff loose in his pockets, as did Frederick the Great. However, according to his valets Constant and Marchand, his pockets were specially made and leather-lined for the purpose. Constant, though admitting that Napoleon did scatter snuff about his clothes and the carpets, says that he often used snuff-boxes and sometimes only sniffed at their contents.

He was not a self-indulgent man, though he liked his surroundings to be luxurious and magnificent; and he was, of course, waited on hand and foot as befitted his position. He frequently slept in his little iron camp-bed, even when not on campaign.

His increasing corpulence, which became positively enormous in middle life, was not due to over-eating. He ate very little but ate it too fast, and, as everyone's plates were whisked away when he had finished, his staff learned to bolt their food or go hungry. He told Dr Foureau de Beauregard in Elba that he knew his 'draught', *son tirant d'eau*, and if he passed it his stomach rejected the surplus, so he seldom needed a doctor.

Writers of previous generations, whilst admitting that the secrets of Napoleon's soul can never be uncovered, the threads in the tapestry of his uniquely colourful life unravelled, nor the mechanisms of his stupendous mind fully comprehended, have nevertheless almost reverently commended the study of Napoleon as a contribution to our knowledge of the power of personality, of great leadership, and of the mastery of men and of circumstances.

But our generation has seen rather too much of dictators, and we may perhaps be excused if we look upon such studies as the investigation of a disease – a disease which can have the gravest results for millions of innocent sufferers from the consequences of megalomania. Significantly it is in some of the books which doctors have written about Napoleon that this disease is actually given names, such as the Malady of Power, Malady of Caesars, and even Caesarism or Caesaritis – self-explanatory even if hideously inelegant terms.

However confident a doctor may feel that the root of his patient's troubles is planted in the mind, it is his duty first of all to eliminate organic disease by a thorough physical examination. To this end we must now take a look at Napoleon's medical history, and it will be seen that certain surprising facts about his body can help to illuminate for us the probable workings of his mind.

CHAPTER II

NAPOLEON AND THE DOCTORS

Doctors have differed about Napoleon's medical history ever since those who were present at the post-mortem examination of his body quarrelled about whether his liver was enlarged or not. During his life his medical attendants disagreed, as doctors will, about the diagnosis and treatment of his ailments, which may have helped to give him a poor opinion of the medical profession.

He was himself such a master of detail and so interested in scientific studies that it is not surprising that he was irritated by the general air of mumbo-jumbo, the unscientific approach of many doctors of his day, and their differences of opinion about problems which he felt should have been resolved by exact scientific methods. He often complained to his doctors that medicine was a matter of uncertainty, conjecture, and opinion, and not an exact science. It was nevertheless a subject which fascinated him. In his youth he studied anatomy, the precision and accuracy of which appealed to him, but he was too squeamish to make a success of such studies, and liked to relate how, when Dr Corvisart once unexpectedly placed in his hands a specimen of a human stomach, he promptly brought up the contents of his own.

He was a generous and enlightened patron of science, and after the death of his little nephew Napoleon, he gave a prize for the best paper on the treatment of croup. Although ready to support and encourage medical research he tended to expect that in return his doctors should be the instruments of his policy in public or private affairs, which, to their credit, some of them refused to become. Dr Desgenettes' criticism of Napoleon about the poisoning of the cases of plague, to which I have already referred, was openly and vigorously expressed; and, although Napoleon was great enough to respect honest and brave opposition, this could not be overlooked, and the temporary eclipse of Desgenettes left the field clear for the great Dominique Larrey to become the outstanding medical man in the Egyptian campaign.

Amongst all his doctors Napoleon had the highest regard for Larrey; but, although he called him the most virtuous man he ever knew, he never really liked him, finding him too cold and reserved. It was a virtue in Napoleon's eyes to refrain from all kinds of opposition, and Larrey qualified for high appreciation, for he was sycophantic and lost no opportunity to curry favour with anyone who could serve his own advancement – a time-server and place-seeker. Harsh words about an inspired surgeon who was devoted to surgery and the care of his patients; but André Soubiran's biography, though written in terms of idolatry shows Larrey as grasping, self-advertising, never satisfied with the money given to him by his more senior patients, avid for patronage and recognition. He even solicited for the award of orders, such as the Russian order of St Vladimir. He was governed by self-interest in a way which today we would call unethical. We certainly hear of no quarrels with Napoleon, such as Sir James McGrigor was ready to risk with his commander-in-chief, Wellington, in pursuit of the best conditions for British wounded soldiers. The great Aberdonian, McGrigor, was never a money-grubber like the great Gascon, Larrey.

Dr Jean Nicolas Corvisart, Napoleon's principal family physician, opposed him in the more delicate field of his personal life, by refusing to be a party to the deception when Napoleon persuaded Josephine to agree to a faked pregnancy in order to provide him with a son and heir. The proposition was quietly dropped and Corvisart promised to keep it a secret; but Napoleon ought to have known better than to have made such a suggestion to an eminent member of the medical profession, and the fact that he did so is one of many indications of his lack of true appreciation of the excellent doctors who served him so well.

Corvisart, who remained a member of Marie Louise's household for a considerable time after her separation from Napoleon, was a sound physician with an international reputation as a pioneer in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of the lungs and heart. Laënnec, the inventor of the stethoscope, was his pupil. Napoleon liked to say that he had no confidence in medicine but great confidence in Corvisart.

Dr Yvan, who accompanied Napoleon on all his campaigns after 1796, was an excellent doctor, who understood his difficult patient perfectly. Hallé and Boyer who, with Corvisart and Yvan, were his principal personal physicians whilst he was Emperor, were also prominent in their profession. Hallé left the Emperor after a

violent scene, with vague hints about having been subjected to some kind of personal indignity, which made it impossible for him to serve a man of the character which he discerned in Napoleon. All we know of this was that he had had his ears pulled, like so many others. He is known to have made a very frank report about Pauline Bonaparte's hysterical temperament, and this was at a time when the rumours about her incestuous relations with Napoleon were being spread abroad – unjustifiably, as I believe.

Napoleon and indeed all the Bonapartes must have been a gold-mine to the medical profession. They were constantly popping off to spas to take 'cures' for their many ailments, real or imaginary, for a tendency to hypochondria shows itself in various members of the family. For all that, Napoleon did not like people to be ill, and would say of anyone who was frequently ill: '*Mais c'est une mazette que cet homme-la.*' It is true that Napoleon often expressed his appreciation of the services of his doctors, treated them well, and bestowed honours and rewards upon them; but his cruel streak prompted him to let them see that they were all 'quacks' to him. He was no admirer of Voltaire, but would have agreed with his definition of medical treatment as the art of pouring drugs of which one knew nothing into a patient of whom one knew less. Expressing approval of the kind of medicine practised in ancient Babylon, where the sick were exposed on the doorsteps so that passers-by could advise about the remedies which had benefited them, Napoleon remarked that with this method one could at least avoid remedies which had proved fatal. But wit was not one of his strong points, and doctors were usually the target for a feeble kind of banter, often with an underlying note of bitterness. 'Well, doctor, how many patients have you killed today?' was a favourite opening shot.

However, the doctors had the last laugh, and Napoleon's opinion of them would have sunk still lower, and with justification, if he could have seen them wrangling over his dead body, or heard the crop of macabre anecdotes, on the 'Imperial Caesar dead and turned to clay' theme, to which their handling of the autopsy gave rise. One of these was told by Dr Arnott, who helped at the autopsy, to Sir James Simpson, the Edinburgh obstetrician who pioneered the use of chloroform as an anaesthetic. Arnott described his precautions to preserve the heart and other parts, as he was afraid that Napoleon's retainers would try to carry them off. He put them in a basin covered with water, and lay down with loaded pistols under his pillow. Hearing a splash he jumped up, but

found 'it was only rats trying to get at the flesh'.

The unpleasant taste of such stories is relieved by the account of a British soldier who led his little son to where Napoleon was lying in state, and told him to take a good look as he had been the greatest man on earth.

Napoleon's constitution and illnesses have been the subject of many articles in medical journals in various languages, and the influence of his medical history on his career has been studied in biographies written by doctors, such as those by Augustin Cabanes, Boris Sokoloff, Raoul Brice, James Kemble and Paul Hillemand. Mr Kemble, an English surgeon, and most recently, Dr Hillemand, have dealt so exhaustively with Napoleon's medical history that it is enough for me to concentrate upon those aspects of it which I believe can teach us something about his sex-life, or about the workings of his mind. Nowadays few intelligent people are unaware of the influence of the mind, particularly the unconscious mind, in causing illness, and such terms as neurotic, hysterical, psychosomatic or emotional illness are widely understood. Such terms were not used in Napoleon's day, but ailments were sometimes described as nervous, rather as patients today will often say: 'I think it must be my nerves, doctor.'

Napoleon is said to have been a nervous child, and he was volatile and excitable. I have already mentioned his violent outbursts of rage and, though cold and hard-hearted, he wept readily. He often seemed unable to keep still, and during conferences or interviews he would dig chunks of wood and upholstery from the arms of his chair with a penknife. In the library of Edinburgh University a table used by Napoleon has in it a small smooth rounded depression, said to have been whittled by his penknife. When in a temper he often smashed furniture, but even when not angry he would fiddle with rare porcelain figures until he broke off arms and legs, whereupon he would scoff at those who were saddened at the sight of such damage, which he said a little glue would repair. All this made people think that he had a curious mania for destruction, as well as nervous excitability. With such a temperament many of his illnesses were naturally enough thought to have been 'nervous'.

Those who knew him well were aware of his liability to stomach upsets when things were not going smoothly, and the strange fits from which he suffered were also apt to occur at times of crisis or tension. The most notorious of these episodes was a convulsive seizure whilst he was in bed with the actress Mademoiselle George,

and he never quite forgave her for arousing the Palace in her alarm, for he hated to be made to look ridiculous, and on this occasion he most certainly was.

Napoleon's 'fits' ranged in severity from moments of abstraction, even transient loss of full consciousness, which puzzled and sometimes slightly scared the bystanders, and which call to mind a minor form of epilepsy known as *petit mal*; up to more serious and prolonged seizures accompanied by convulsions, which have led some authorities to support Corvisart's diagnosis that they were epileptic. Others have attributed the fits to a disorder of the pituitary gland, which lies just below the brain. Napoleon's pituitary will be discussed later in this chapter.

Not unexpectedly it has been thought that Napoleon's fits, and his urinary disorders, might have been the result of some form of venereal infection, for which I think there is insufficient evidence. Another suggestion is that some of the fits in which he lost consciousness could have been Stokes-Adams attacks, which are associated with heart-block. In support of this is the fact that he had an abnormally slow pulse-rate, at forty to the minute.

Dr Yvan, who from 1796 to 1814 was required to be in constant attendance on the Emperor in the field, recognised and wrote about the nervous element in Napoleon's temperament. In a medical report written in Russia in 1812 Dr Yvan said this:

> The constitution of the Emperor was highly nervous. He was very susceptible to emotional influences, and the spasm was ordinarily divided between the stomach and the bladder. When the irritation affected the stomach he had a nervous cough which exhausted his emotional and physical forces to such an extent that his mind was not the same. The bladder ordinarily shared the spasm, and he then found himself under an influence both painful and fatiguing.

Napoleon often said: 'I live only by the skin.' His doctors confirmed this, and explained that the hot baths, in which he spent so much time, helped the functioning of his skin. Dr Yvan, writing about Napoleon's dependence on his skin, had this to say:

> As soon as his pores were contracted from either an emotional or an atmospheric cause the appearance of irritation was manifested, with a result more or less serious, and the cough or ischuria became pronounced. All these

manifestations ceased with the re-establishment of the function of the skin.

Napoleon's nervous ischuria (difficulty in passing water) will be dealt with in Chapter 4.

Dr Yvan was rather ahead of his time in recognising that Napoleon's frequent skin disorders were one of his nervous or emotional troubles. Realisation that the skin is just another organ of the body which responds to emotional tension has grown considerably in recent years. It has of course been known for a long time that the tiny blood vessels in the skin, and the sweating apparatus, controlled by the sympathetic nervous system, react to emotional stress. We grow pale with shock, redden with shame or embarrassment, sweat with fear. Witch doctors have taken advantage of the cold wet palms of emotional tension and anxiety to detect offenders. The pimply face of adolescence, notwithstanding the influence of hormones from the developing sex glands, may be also a manifestation of the anxiety associated with the difficulties of growing up; and suggestions, whether joking or serious, that such conditions are due to not washing, or to 'impure blood', whatever that may mean, merely aggravate the anxiety and make matters worse. Probably not even ignorant headmasters any longer hint that they are due to masturbation, to which, incidentally, Lewis Way, in *Adler's Place in Psychology*, tells us Napoleon was said to resort for the relief of tension before a battle.

For many years before he met Dr Yvan, Napoleon suffered from an intractable skin disease which was diagnosed as scabies. He himself always said that it was caused by handling an infected ramrod at the siege of Toulon – a typical example of the tall stories which soldiers sometimes expect their medical officers to swallow, though there is no reason to think that Napoleon did not himself believe it. Mr Kemble considers that Napoleon suffered from neurodermatitis, which is described in textbooks as resulting from chronic scratching of the skin under the stress and anxiety of emotional conflict, arising particularly from social or sexual problems. Now, it was in 1799, by no means a smoothly successful year for Napoleon until his *coup d'état* in early November, the *Coup de Brumaire*, that we hear of him scratching at the pimples on his face so fiercely that his face was covered with blood, and his soldiers thought that he had been wounded. His valet Constant recorded that at Fontainebleau before his departure to Elba

Napoleon's agitation 'actually reached such a pitch that on several occasions I saw him dig his nails into his thigh so vehemently that the blood came, though he did so without noticing it'. He had some kind of sinus on his thigh, probably resulting from a wound at the siege of Toulon, at which he would tear in moments of stress, and when the blood flowed he felt physical and mental relief. Dr Antommarchi who was his last personal doctor in St Helena, described one such episode:

> 'Thanks, doctor,' he said. 'I have something better than your pharmacy. The moment approaches, I feel Nature will relieve herself.' In saying this he threw himself upon a chair, and seizing his left thigh, tore it open with a kind of eager delight. His scars opened anew, and the blood gushed out.

Kemble says that there were other parts of his body 'where he chose to "open a vent" for the bad humours, as he imagined'. Kemble sees this as another example of his neurodermatitis. His valet Marchand related how in Elba Napoleon used to talk to Dr Foureau de Beauregard about his habit of scratching at these places on his body until they bled. He regarded this habit as a therapeutic one, equivalent to the practice of bleeding, and he knew in advance when crises of this sort were approaching. These strange practices recall the description of the feeling of bursting, of surface tension and internal pressure, which the controversial psychologist, Wilhelm Reich, associated with failure to achieve perfect sexual adjustment.

Another physical sign of Napoleon's unquiet mind was the muscular twitching affecting different parts of his body, which was written about by a great many contemporary observers, including de Bourrienne who wrote:

> He frequently gave an involuntary shrug of his right shoulder which was accompanied by a movement of his mouth from left to right. This habit was always most noticeable when his mind was absorbed in the consideration of any profound subject.

Such involuntary movements are called tics or habit spasms, and are a motor manifestation of psychological tension. Lord Moran called them 'the certain badge of nervous tension'.

Dr Cabanes, the French author of many medical studies of great

men in history, has compiled from a wide range of close observers of Napoleon a most formidable list of his nervous habits – twitchings, jerkings, nail-biting, and emotional outbursts of rage or weeping. Under the heading of 'Tics' he also gives a great many eye-witnesses' accounts of Napoleon's habit of grasping his soldiers' noses, and of tweaking, pinching, and slapping men, women and children. These are not properly referred to as tics, and I will discuss them when dealing with the sadistic element in his nature.

There is abundant evidence to support Dr Yvan's opinion that Napoleon was of a nervous temperament, and that many of his illnesses were, as we would express it today, psychosomatic or emotional, being physical manifestations of a failure to achieve perfect adjustment to the demands of the sexual instinct.

Before discussing the psychological aspect of the case we must complete our physical examination by taking a look at some of the post-mortem findings. This will at once plunge us into another of the whirlpools of conflicting opinion which revolve perpetually around almost every aspect of Napoleon's history, but it will also throw an interesting spotlight upon his sexual problems.

Considering the hit-or-miss methods of diagnosis and the undeveloped state of medical science in Napoleon's day it is understandable that there should have been disagreement about whether he was epileptic, tuberculous, the victim of stones in the bladder, or of some other form of urinary disorder,[1] and whether his skin disease was scabies or not; but it is a little surprising that there should have been disagreement about the cause of his death. The arguments begun in St Helena in 1821 continue to this day.

His unexpected death shocked countless Frenchmen, who felt that his body must be as imperishable as his name. Murder by various means was freely alleged; and in 1962 a Swedish dental surgeon, Sten Forshufvud, revived the theory that Napoleon was poisoned by arsenic, possibly by de Montholon. Forshufvud failed to make many converts, and the most popular diagnosis is still the one made at the post-mortem examination, that Napoleon died of cancer of the stomach. However the views of a formidable list of experts who have been unable to accept this theory emboldened the American author Ralph Korngold (1960) to state that it is accepted by most modern pathologists that Napoleon did not die of cancer. The most probable alternative diagnosis is a liver abscess resulting from intestinal and hepatic amoebiasis, a protozoal

infection which was almost certainly endemic in St Helena at the time.

Since this chapter is designed to explore Napoleon's mental or emotional make-up the precise cause of his death is of minor importance; but one apparently bizarre theory is interesting. This is that Napoleon died of boredom, which was first suggested by Las Cases in 1823 and revived in a letter to *The Times* 11th December 1962 by Monsieur Gilbert Martineau, the French consul in St Helena. Whilst he was in Elba Napoleon had written: 'On a small island once one has set the mechanism going, nothing is left but to die of boredom – or in some heroic venture to escape from it.'

Is death from boredom possible? Recent descriptions of the so-called 'gold-watch syndrome', due to the boredom of retirement, hint that it may be. That highly lethal condition beloved of film-makers – absence of the will to live – really can be a factor in the progress of illness. As an experienced surgeon recently put it: 'It is a well-known thing that some orientals can and do simply turn their faces to the wall and die, and that there is nothing yet in medical science that can prevent them.'*

In a report of a clinico-pathological conference about a very difficult case of adult coeliac disease (*British Medical Journal* 15th June 1968) the family doctor, dissenting from the views of the learned consultants, traced the psychosomatic influences in his patient's life, and concluded: 'I feel that he died because all that he lived for had somehow come to nothing.'

How exactly this fits Napoleon. His worst enemy could hardly fail to be moved by the pathos of a remark which he made to General Gourgaud, who had been grumbling about the intolerable *ennui* of life in St Helena – 'Do you think that I have no bad moments when I lie awake at night and think what I was – and what I am.'

And now for the spotlight which Napoleon's dead body can direct into the hidden recesses of his sexual difficulties.

Post-mortem examinations have usually little to contribute to psychiatry which must deal with the living troubled mind; but in Napoleon's case we can learn from his body something about the doubts which must have afflicted his mind.

Antommarchi may have been an indifferent doctor, but as a former prosector, or assistant to the professor of anatomy in Florence, he was at least qualified to perform the post-mortem

* *The Shadowless Lamp.* Richard Hunt. William Kimber 1971

examination, which he did in the presence of seven British doctors. But even here he failed, not Napoleon who was now mercifully immune from his mishandling, but posterity. From an anatomist we might expect precise details of Napoleon's external appearance to supplement the many descriptions of his physique by contemporary observers and the evidence of portraits and sketches. He made an exact measurement of Napoleon's height, and this is discussed in Chapter 3; but apart from this, and some craniological rubbish about organs of conquest, of ambition and love of glory, we are fobbed off with the tantalising comment that the hands and feet were rather small, and 'all other parts of the body were nearly in the ordinary proportions'.

From an anatomist that 'nearly' is not quite good enough. Fortunately Antommarchi's deficiency was to some extent remedied by the British Army surgeon, Walter Henry, who seems to have been the only one among those present fully to comprehend the historical importance, and interest to posterity, of the scene at which they were assisting. In his memoirs Henry veiled some significant details in Latin – *Partes viriles exiguitatis insignis, sicut pueri, videbantur.* ('The private parts were seen to be remarkably small, like a boy's.')

He might have been less discreet if he had known about the bawdy language in which Napoleon's physical shortcomings had been described by some of his generals and soldiers, and even by his beloved Josephine. However Henry also made a straightforward medical report for the Governor, which has been printed in at least two books intended for the general reader, but is probably little known. An extract from it which has a bearing on Napoleon's sex-life is reproduced here:

> The whole surface of the body was deeply covered in fat. Over the sternum (breast bone where generally the bone is very superficial the fat was upwards of an inch deep, and an inch and a half or two inches on the abdomen. The skin was noticed to be very white and delicate, as were the hands and arms. Indeed the whole body was slender and effeminate. There was scarcely any hair on the body, and that of the head was fine and silky. The pubis much resembled the mons veneris in women. The muscles of the chest were small, and the shoulders narrow and the hips wide. The penis and testicles were very small, and the whole genital system seemed to exhibit a physical cause for the absence of sexual

> desire and the chastity which had been stated to have characterised the deceased.

The word 'slender' in this report conflicts with all contemporary evidence, and as Henry himself said in his memoirs that 'the body was found enormously fat', it is obvious that he used the term to reinforce his description of the body as 'effeminate'.

To several observers a feminine quality was perceptible in Napoleon's magnetic power to woo the affections of those whom he wished to enslave; but even more noticeable to his contemporaries was a gradually increasing female configuration of his body. Many references to this are to be found in the literature, some of which seem to stem from similar sources, such as remarks made by de Ségur, Las Cases, and Antommarchi; but some independent observers have supplied corroborative details. We read of 'a roundness not belonging to our sex', and there are many descriptions of his hands, such as this one by Captain Maitland of *Bellerophon*: 'His hands were also very small and had the plumpness of a woman's rather than the robustness of a man's.' The Duchess of Abrantes called them beautiful little pink hands; and Napoleon's secretary, de Méneval, said that they were delicate and plump with taper fingers. Napoleon was very proud of his plump and shapely hands, and also, according to de Méneval, he 'loved to joke about the fatness of his breasts'.

In fact it is to Napoleon himself that we owe the most complete picture of his own appearance in his later life, in a remark which he made to Antommarchi, of which there are different translations, on the following lines:

> See, doctor, what lovely arms, what smooth white skin without a single hair! Breasts plump and rounded – any beauty would be proud of a bosom like mine. And my hand – how many amongst the fair sex would be jealous of it.

Considering Napoleon's dislike and contempt for Antommarchi, who was to him the wrong sort of Corsican, this sounds to me like a pathetic appeal for at least one doctor to understand this most intimate problem. When Napoleon saw in his own figure, as many writers who knew him personally have confirmed that he did, a resemblance to a young female beauty, he flattered himself. A well-known story related how, as he sat beside his new Empress

Marie Louise in his coach, dressed in the over-ornate robes which he had himself designed for state occasions, he was mistaken for her elderly governess by a bystander who is variously described as a provincial footman, an elderly peasant, or a young country boy. The portrait of Napoleon painted at St Cloud in March 1812 makes it abundantly clear how easy it must have been to make such a mistake. Looking at that portrait, which is reproduced opposite page 65 of this book, and in imagination placing the absurd feathered bonnet above the 'pale, puffed womanish face', the mistake does not seem surprising. The conquering-general fades into the comfortable old governess with little strain on our credulity.

I find it impossible to believe that this domineering ruler of men, to whom virility must have meant a lot, really did love to joke about the fatness of his breasts, or that his feminine shape was anything but a cruel personal tragedy, about which he tried to show a brave face. It must have been at least part of his failure to achieve perfect sexual adjustment, leading to psychological mechanisms which made him the kind of man he was. His womanly appearance, and small external genital organs (hypogonadism) could have been the result of various conditions which are recognised today, but were unknown to doctors in his day.

Dr Leonard Guthrie, in 1913, expounded the theory that Napoleon was a case of Fröhlich's Syndrome – *dystrophia adiposo-genitalis* – and Dr Sokoloff, Lieutenant-General Brice, Mr Kemble and other medical experts have agreed with him. This term was applied to cases in which arrested genital development is associated with obesity and some stunting of growth; but it would be unprofitable to discuss in any detail whether this diagnostic label can properly be applied to Napoleon, because modern thought inclines to the view that the cases in which it can be used are very few; and indeed the term Fröhlich's Syndrome is an outmoded one of mainly historical interest.

Knowledge of endocrinology has progressed since Fröhlich defined the syndrome, but although it would be unfashionable to regard it as a specific disease or entity in itself, the findings associated with it continue to be recognisable in cases in which there is some disorder of the pituitary gland, which was always recognised as being the cause of the condition, together with damage to the neighbouring area of the brain called the hypothalamus. The pituitary gland is an internally secreting gland of the

endocrine system, and has been called 'the leader of the endocrine orchestra', an expression which indicates how closely linked are disturbances of these important glands, which control many aspects of growth and development.

Several medical writers have believed that during the period of Napoleon's greatest ascendancy there was excessive activity of his pituitary gland, which became exhausted prematurely – 'burned out' in popular parlance – with resultant hypopituitarism (under-activity of the gland) and progressive deficiency of its internal secretion. This could account for the very well-authenticated change in his physique and personality which began in about 1805 or 1808, with increasing obesity, lessened vitality, and a tendency to be sleepy. The process, according to Dr Guthrie, also included mental decadence, sulky puerile behaviour, and culminated in a peevish, boring, prematurely aged man, untidy in his habits, easily tired and spending much of his time lying on a couch.

Napoleon himself obviously recognised the onset of this change, and he often said that forty would be his dangerous age, when he expected to become very fat. He said that at forty a man is too old to make war, an opinion which few generals of today would care to endorse, any more than the sprightly members of the older set at many a hunt ball would like his remark in a letter to Josephine, dated 9th October 1808, less than two months after his thirty-ninth birthday: 'I attended the Weimar Ball. The Emperor Alexander dances; but not I, forty years are forty years.'

The change in Napoleon's personality was particularly noticeable to his generals, many of whom commented very forcibly upon it. Marshal Michel Ney, for example, said, during the Russian campaign, that he wished Napoleon would go back to his Court and leave his generals to get on with the fighting. Carnot, the Minister of War, wrote:

> I no longer know him. He used to be lean, shy, and silent. Now he is fat and garrulous. He is sleepy, and his mind wanders. He, the man of rapid decisions, who resented the proffer of advice, now talks instead of acting, and asks opinions.

Claude Manceron, in *Which Way to Turn*, describes Napoleon's swithering indecisions after Waterloo, in striking contrast to the man of action who is the hero of that author's equally brilliant book *Austerlitz*.

It must have been on account of the physical change in Napoleon that Dr Corvisart warned him against marrying again, which he did at the age of forty and seven months. Corvisart later believed that this second marriage had adversely affected Napoleon's health; but he did not explain his reasons for this view, nor what were his grounds for advising Napoleon not to marry.

That the notorious change in Napoleon was associated with loss of mental balance, and the abuse of power, was the opinion of Adolphe Thiers, a highly esteemed historian whose history of Napoleon ran into twenty large volumes. Many historians have agreed with him. Dr Sokoloff saw it all as part of what he called the malady of power, or the malady of Caesars, in which abuse of power leads to destruction of the physical balance with endocrine changes and altered personality. Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great, he tells us, shared Napoleon's irritability, peculiar paroxysms of fury, convulsions, nervous spasmodic movements and involuntary twitchings. It would be interesting to hear the views of Hitler's doctor on this syndrome.

The pituitary gland stimulates the gonads or sex glands to activity; and deficiency of its secretion, by affecting the internal secretion of the sex glands and the adrenal glands, is associated with changes in the secondary sexual characteristics, which are the characteristics which distinguish male from female.

Dr Cabanes discussed the possibility that Napoleon's effeminate body was the result of a defect of the pituitary gland. The descriptions of Napoleon's body fit very well into the picture of what is called Pituitary Eunuchoidism. His hands were typical of that condition, and so was his hair, which in many portraits looks very like the fine silky hair often seen in these cases. Mrs Abell, who as Betsy Balcombe knew him very well indeed in St Helena, described it thus: 'His hair was dark brown, and as fine and silky as a child's, rather too much so indeed for a man as its very softness caused it to look thin.'

Apart from his hands and hair there is a startling difference between the plump-faced increasingly obese figure of the portraits from about 1808, and the lean hawk-faced young general with spaniel-ears of hair down to his shoulders. Captain Basil Hall, the sailor whose meeting with Napoleon is described in Chapter One, wrote of his pale face like marble 'without a single wrinkle or trace of a furrow'. An eminent physician, Professor Sir Derrick Dunlop, in a personal communication, says that this 'is an admirable description of the youthful eunuchoid or Klinefelter patient,

though when eunuchs get to middle age they are apt to develop little wrinkles in their colourless skin which give them the appearance of an elderly aunt'. Napoleon was forty-eight when Captain Hall met him, so perhaps he should have had a few wrinkles, but we have already heard that he had been taken for an elderly governess five years earlier. The term 'Klinefelter patient', and the fact that some medical writers have referred to Napoleon's external genital organs as 'infantile',[2] leads me to a brief appraisal of Napoleon's bodily appearance in terms of modern knowledge of genetics.

Genetic factors are more important than hormones in sex determination, and within the past twenty years or so advances in the science of genetics have thrown new light on physical types such as the man with whom we are dealing here. The surprisingly diverse paths which sexual adaptation and development can take through the jungle of intersexuality, and the even more devious paths into with psychological adaptations to sex can divert us, will be surveyed in Chapter 4. Here, in the post-mortem room, the possibility that we are dealing with one of the so-called intersex types, however unlikely it may be, at least deserves a mention.

A new era in genetics began in 1949 with the discovery that there is a difference in the nuclei of cells which is characteristic of females; and within six years it had been found that differences between the nuclei of the body cells of males and females could be detected in smears of the mucous membrane lining the mouth, and even in certain blood cells. The practice of 'nuclear sexing' now became a new weapon in the diagnostician's armamentarium.

Sex is determined by the kind of spermatozoon, described as X-bearing or Y-bearing, which happens to fertilise the ovum. In general, X chromosomes produce girls and Y chromosomes boys; but during development things may go wrong and a great variety of intersex types may result, with various abnormalities and combinations of abnormalities of the sexual organs and of the secondary sexual characteristics. One of the most clearly defined of these intersex types is known as Klinefelter's Syndrome, which was first described in 1942. The normal chromosomal patterns are X Y for a male and X X for a female. In Klinefelter's Syndrome the pattern is X X Y, so that the Y chromosome which is responsible for the development of the testicles has to compete with two X chromosomes instead of only one. This condition is not particularly rare, and is possibly as common as one in every four or five hundred live male births. Any reader who cares to

study this subject in such textbooks of genetics as those named in the medical bibliography at the end of this book, will find that the appearance of cases of Klinefelter's Syndrome resembles Napoleon's body as Dr Henry and others described it.

Hypogonadism has many causes. Sometimes no cause at all may be discernible. In Napoleon's case everything points to the probability that he did not suffer from a genetic condition, such as Klinefelter's Syndrome, but from a secondary condition, a pituitary gonadotrophic failure, associated with the pituitary changes which many medical experts have believed were responsible for the changes in him which began when he was thirty-five to thirty-nine years old.[3] The evidence which suggests that he was a hypogonadotrophic eunuchoid type of individual would indicate that it is unlikely that he could have procreated children, and this will be discussed in Chapter 10.

The faulty functioning of Napoleon's pituitary gland, with associated defects of other hormones, has been invoked by many medical historians, perhaps too enthusiastically, to explain various facets of his character; the waxing and waning of its secretion have been correlated with fluctuations in his intellectual power, and with his success or failure in battle. We must not get carried away too far by such theorising. The stubborn endurance of the British infantry, and Wellington's superb generalship, did far more to win the Battle of Waterloo than Napoleon's pituitary or his prolapsed piles did to lose it.

The cause of Napoleon's hypogonadism and of the feminine appearance of his body is of purely academic interest, but I think that it will be agreed that this disability must have had a profound effect upon his adaptation to the demands of the sexual instinct. The foregoing examination of his character and of his medical history has furnished ample indications of the need for a psychiatric investigation. It may seem absurd to suggest that a psychiatric diagnosis can be made without examining the patient, but that is just what is often done when a coroner returns a verdict 'of unsound mind'.

In the practice of psychiatry it is essential to let the patient talk about himself, his anxieties and aspirations. Napoleon needed no encouragement to do this. He had an astonishing capacity, amounting to narcissism, for standing, as it were, outside himself, contemplating his own career with a kind of wondering awe, not unmixed with whole-hearted admiration. Most of the valuable information about this supremely self-centred man is to be gleaned

from his own writings, his interminable dictations, his conversations and confessions recorded by relatives, friends, enemies, secretaries, valets, soldiers and statesmen of France and other nations.

The sexual sphere would appear to be the most significant aspect of Napoleon's case; but there are other facets of his character and personality which are very interesting pieces in the jigsaw puzzle, and these I will now try to fit into the picture.

CHAPTER III

SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCES

The contempt which Napoleon expressed for medical theories which seemed to him to lack scientific proof would certainly have been extended to psychological theorisation. The secrets of the mind cannot be dissected or explained by exact scientific methods, such as those which commended to Napoleon the study of anatomy. He would have given short shrift to Dr Yvan or any other doctor had they attempted to explain to him the mechanism by which his mind could have produced a physical state; and he would surely have resented as an impertinence any attempt to probe the secrets of his mind.

Even now I feel it to be somewhat impertinent to try to confine his overwhelming and many-sided personality within the framework of any psychological category. Jacques Bainville's opinion, that Napoleon's personality is too elusive to be captured in any psychological portrait, might deter anyone from attempting the impossible, but I think that previous attempts to psychoanalyse Napoleon may have failed because of the omission of a very important prelude to a psychological diagnosis, which is a thorough physical examination. I at least have not been guilty of that omission, and the broad outlines which my portrait will take can be deduced from the significant facts which I have related, pointing to a physical disability in the genital system.

But, although the sexual factor often has a profound effect upon an individual's behaviour and the development of his character and personality, it should never be the only aspect of his life to which a psychiatrist's attention is directed. In this chapter, without attempting to fit Napoleon into any specific category, I will describe various psychological factors which appear to have affected his personality.

In one textbook of psychology Napoleon is included, together with Joan of Arc, T.E. Lawrence, and habitual criminals, under the heading of 'Psychopathic Personality'. This is not an exact

diagnosis so much as a descriptive label, and before any reader indignantly dismisses the idea that it can justly be applied to Napoleon, let me quote what Lord Taylor had to say in 1963, at a Congress of the Royal Society of Health:

> Lord Taylor suggested that psychopaths (mentally disordered people who are abnormally aggressive or irresponsible) burned themselves out by forty. They lose the energy which makes them such a bloody nuisance before forty. Hitler was the king of all psychopaths. In some ways he was frightfully energetic, but when it came to anything difficult he was intellectually lazy. Psychopaths are not lazy in scheming.*

Much of this applies to Napoleon, who himself recognised the decline in his powers which began just before he was forty; and I have recounted the evidence which led medical experts to deduce that his pituitary gland became 'burned out' at about that time in his life. History has recorded many occasions on which intellectual and physical laziness overcame his restless energy; and 'bloody nuisance' is an understatement of the opinions held of him by millions of good Europeans in his day. As for 'scheming', Napoleon himself said, 'I am crafty', and he could have given points to Machiavelli, the proponent of government by guile or artifice.

The psychologist Wilhelm Reich defined Napoleon as a phallic-narcissistic character, which is a type associated with great energy, but also with passive tendencies, and an unconscious desire for revenge against the opposite sex. Much of Napoleon's sex life is indeed covered by that definition, and when we remember not only his mighty achievements but the deeds which his enemies called crimes against humanity, and which even his friends have not all agreed to whitewash, it is without surprise that we learn from Reich's teaching that such a character may become a creative genius or a large-scale criminal, depending upon the social atmosphere in which he grows up, and the possibilities it provides for an outlet of the energy in a sublimated form.

Now, it is not enough to say that Napoleon was a phallic-narcissistic type, or that he had a psychopathic personality, without probing more deeply into psychological mechanisms which could have contributed to this; and the proper place to start is with childhood influences.[1]

* As reported in *The Daily Telegraph*, 1st May 1963.

All psychologists recognise that the early years of childhood are a period of great importance in the formation of character and personality. Alfred Adler believed that an individual's style of life is established in the first four or five years of his life. In Napoleon's early life there is much interesting material for our case notes.

In the history of a psychiatric case great importance is attached to the child's place in the family, and, if he is not the youngest child, the age at which he was superseded in that position by the next child is often important. There are characteristic features in the psychological make-up of only children, of oldest, and of second children.

One might think that there could be no argument about the fact that Napoleon was the second child in his family, but that would be reckoning without the perversity which afflicts so many of his biographers. Several of them have examined the theory that he was really the oldest child, and that his birth certificate was switched with that of Joseph his elder brother, in order to secure for him a place as a bursar at the military school of Brienne, because he was the son who was clearly destined for the army.

He was the first Corsican to be thus educated at the expense of the French king, and had he been Joseph's age he would have been too old when the application for this privilege was made. Doubts about his real age have been strengthened by the fact that at the time of his marriage to Josephine he gave his age as twenty-eight, though it was really twenty-six. But as Josephine, who was nearly thirty-three, also gave her age as twenty-eight, it looks as if they had agreed to conceal the difference in their ages.

When Napoleon was a schoolboy of fifteen his father discussed his elder brother Joseph's future with him in a manner which suggests that he already felt that Napoleon was the son who would assume the position of head of the family; and, when Carlo Buonaparte died less than a year later, that is just what Napoleon did. His strong and determined character led his family to look upon him as its head even at this early age. But, despite occasional disagreements, he had considerable respect for Joseph, and with typical Corsican clan spirit, often treated him as the rightful head of the family.

There is clearly nothing to be gained by disputing the accepted fact that he was the second son; and the historian Norwood Young believed that his character was typical of a second son, who may be impelled to a natural aggressiveness by an unconscious striving

to surpass the elder brother. Alfred Adler expresses the second child's position as follows:

> In later development the second child is rarely able to endure the strict leadership of others, or to accept the idea of 'eternal laws'. He will be much more inclined to believe, rightly or wrongly, that there is no power in the world which cannot be overthrown.*[2]

This cap assuredly fits Napoleon. Displacement by a younger child often leads children to be aggressive, disobedient and domineering, and to adopt unconscious devices to regain the affection of their parents of which they feel deprived. 'Napoleone' was displaced as the baby of the family by Lucciano, later to be called Lucien, at the rather awkward age of six – too old to accept the new arrival naturally, and too young to be encouraged to take it philosophically. It could have been another stimulus to his aggressiveness.

Amongst early influences none is of greater significance than the mother; and the claim of Napoleon's mother to have been a remarkable woman is securely established by a number of biographies, of which two recent ones, by Alain Decaux, and Monica Stirling, should finally dispel any lingering traces of the once accepted picture of Letizia Buonaparte as a simple peasant woman, barely comprehending the cataclysmic changes in the fortunes of her family, and parsimoniously hoarding the money given to her by the Emperor, against a rainy day.

Her claim to have been a good mother to her fantastic family of adventurers, with a sprinkling of moral delinquents and psychopaths, rests securely on her own claim, fully borne out by her conduct, that the child she loved most was the one who at the time was suffering most. In later life, though she gave to Napoleon the respect which she considered was his due as Emperor, she never quite abrogated her own right to exercise authority over her son. She has been described as devoted, unselfish, and tender yet severe; but this is not the whole story.

I intend to show that Napoleon had homosexual tendencies, and in the development of such traits parental, and especially maternal, influences play a leading part. Madame Mère was certainly not the kind of mother usually thought of as making her sons homosexual – the clinging type who keeps them tied to her

* *Problems of Neurosis*, Kegan Paul, Trench & Trubner 1929.

Carlo Buonaparte, Napoleon's father
From an engraving by W. Read after a portrait by Bolliard

Letizia Buonaparte, Napoleon's mother
From an engraving after a painting by Gérard

Napoleon
From an engraving by Levachez after a portrait by Boilly; published in August 1802

Napoleon
From an engraving by Hopwood

Portrait of Napoleon by Girodet
Trioson at Saint-Cloud in 1812
Reproduced by kind permission of the Director of the Musée Bertrand, Châteauroux

General Louis Desaix de Veygoux

apron strings, and seeks to entrench herself in their hearts to the exclusion of other, less secure, love affairs. Perhaps it was unwise of her to send him to a girls' school where he was the only boy, but she certainly did not make him a 'mother's boy'.

Parental influences are a complex study, and without becoming involved in psychiatrists' jargon about Oedipus situations and the child's identification with one or other parent, it is enough to say that Freud found that men are particularly liable to become homosexual if their fathers are weak or absent, and it is the mother who dominates their lives, frustrating and punishing them when necessary in the process of enforcing discipline.

This was precisely the situation in the Buonaparte family. Napoleon himself described how his mother did all the punishing while their easy-going father tried to excuse his children's faults. That she was no believer in half measures is illustrated by an incident which, believe it or not, occurred when Napoleon was an artillery lieutenant nearly eighteen years old. His grandmother, Signora Fesch, had complained that he and Pauline had imitated her rheumatic gait, with this result in Napoleon's own words:

> My mother, though she loved us greatly, would stand no nonsense, and I saw in her eyes that I was in a bad case. Pauline soon received her fate, a petticoat being easier to raise than trousers to unbutton. That evening my mother tried to get hold of me, but without success, and I began to think that I had escaped altogether. Next morning she pushed me away when I approached to kiss her. However I thought no more of it, when later in the day she said to me 'Napoleon, thou art invited to dine with the Governor, go and dress.' I went upstairs very pleased to dine with the officers, but my mother was playing with me as a cat with a mouse. She entered my room suddenly and shut the door; I then saw the trap into which I had fallen, but it was too late, and I had to submit to a spanking* (*je dus subir la fessée*).

Napoleon was clearly not the only crafty Buonaparte. After that one is not surprised that Napoleon said that his mother had a more masculine than a feminine nature, with 'the head of a man on the body of a woman'. Such extraordinary treatment, if it was in any way habitual, could have helped to implant the sado-masochistic tendencies which were apparent in his nature, and also

* *The Growth of Napoleon* by Norwood Young; John Murray 1910

to incline him towards homosexuality.

Madame Mère's dislike of Josephine did not spring from the possessive tendencies by which mothers may sometimes incline their sons to homosexuality. She was affronted because her son had not consulted her or the family before getting married. She disapproved of the irregularity of the marriage, of Josephine's extravagance, and her flighty irresponsible nature. Her dislike was sharpened when she learned of Josephine's infidelity, and of the wounding things which she was known to have said about Napoleon's sexual potency. The Buonapartes united behind the formidable matriarch in relentlessly scheming to separate Napoleon from his wife. Madame Mère's attitude towards the one woman to whom her son professed himself to have been genuinely attached cannot have endeared her to him, but it was characteristic of an uncompromising sternness in her nature, which he himself inherited.

Did Napoleon and his mother really love one another? Claude Manceron uncompromisingly says that they did not, and he believes that 'you could put the whole history of their relationship under a magnifying glass and still not find a trace of tenderness'. It was a relationship of mutual and sometimes guarded respect, rather than true affection. He always spoke of her with great esteem, but without deep affection, and he seems to have been more fond of his gentle ineffective father than of his beautiful but stern and unbending mother.

Just how unbending she could be is illustrated by a simple little incident of his schooldays. Napoleon had written a bitter letter complaining that all the other boys had pocket-money and he had none. The letter fell into his mother's hands, and although he got his money, it was from her that he received an extremely stern letter about the enormity of demanding money from his father. Carlo Buonaparte could not have written a letter so lacking in tenderness, and would surely have understood what his little son was undergoing in France, isolated from family and friends. Many years later Napoleon would show that he had not forgotten what it was like to be the only boy without pocket-money.

The Buonaparte family was ruled by a stern matriarch, but it sounds a happy one, and the experience of leaving it when only nine years old for a distant military school in a strange land must have been a considerable shock. Several biographers have believed that Napoleon was profoundly affected by childhood humiliations and persecution which he suffered at the hands of

well-born young Frenchmen. Whatever may be the truth about this, Napoleon's schooldays could certainly have provided a breeding-ground for feelings of inferiority. Few if any of us are quite immune to such feelings, and a few words about their origin may help to explain how Napoleon might have been affected.

Alfred Adler can be called the father of the inferiority complex, about which most of us are prepared to talk glibly, if not always with complete understanding. His place in the triumvirate of pioneers, Freud, Jung and Adler, who charted for us the fascinating territory of man's unconscious mind, was defined by the great Karl Jung when he wrote:

> Freud began by taking sexuality as the only psychic driving power, and only after my break with him did he grant an equal status to other psychic activities as well; whilst Adler has shown convincingly that many cases of neurosis can more satisfactorily be explained on the ground of an urge to power than by the pleasure principle.*

An urge to power – this may be why I find that Adler is very helpful in one's efforts to understand Napoleon; and his teaching, moreover, is the most easily understood by amateur psychologists, which really means all of us, for Jung said that modern psychology is no more than 'the testimony of a few individuals here and there regarding what they have found within themselves'.

Adler taught that all human beings have a deeply rooted desire for dominance or superiority. Our progress towards what he called the Goal of Superiority is impeded by Feelings of Inferiority, which have their origin when the small weak child is entirely dependent for its existence upon great and powerful adults. Although many people lose such feelings a considerable number seize upon any evidence, real or imaginary, of their inferiority and build these feelings into a barrier across the path to the unconscious Goal of Superiority. The unconscious mind, unwilling to accept the idea of inferiority, can take one or both of two paths around the barrier. One is to concoct excuses for the apparent failure, which often take the form of illness – neurotic or emotional illness: 'I would have been as good as the others, but for my headaches, my gastric ulcer' and so on. A less negative path is by what is called compensation – the development of some personal quality which can offset or compensate for the feeling of

* *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Kegan Paul, Trench & Trubner 1933.

inferiority. This can be a useful process if kept within normal limits, but it can get out of hand; the qualities unconsciously directed to compensate for the inferiority are exaggerated, and the process becomes over-compensation. The meticulously tidy individual with a passion for cleanliness may be over-compensating for deep-seated tendencies in the reverse direction. The ostentatious behaviour of the parvenu betrays an inner lack of self-assurance; and aggressive masculinity and the exaggeration of manly qualities may cover an unconfessed awareness of defective masculinity.

In Napoleon's case the only source of inferiority feelings which usually springs to mind is his height. His smallness is almost proverbial, and many 'psychiatrist jokes' play upon it. Small people are often comforted by reminders that the great Napoleon was also small. Shortness is often associated with jealous rivalry, aggressiveness, and a desire for self-assertion; so it has often been said that compensation for his shortness was the chief spur to his ambition.

There is, in fact, a good deal of diversity of opinion about his height and general appearance. Officers of the army and navy are usually good judges of height and build, but there is little uniformity in the opinions of those who saw Napoleon in captivity. Walter Henry, the army surgeon whose report on Napoleon's post-mortem appearance is quoted in Chapter Two had this to say about his aspect when alive in St Helena:

> Napoleon's first appearance was far from imposing, the stature was short and thick, his head sunk into the shoulders, his face fat, with large folds under the chin; the limbs appeared to be stout and well-proportioned, complexion olive, expression sinister, forbidding and rather scowling.

Captain Sir Humphrey Senhouse, Flag Captain to Admiral Sir Henry Hotham saw a lot of him after his surrender, and was equally unflattering: 'His figure is very bad; he is short, with a large head, his hands and legs small, and his body so corpulent as to project very considerably.' He also commented on Napoleon's attitude to women: 'I could not avoid remarking his sovereign contempt for women.' Captain Lewis Maitland of *Bellerophon* was kindlier, and he wrote:

> He was then a remarkably strong well-built man, about five feet seven inches high, his limbs particularly well-formed, with a fine ankle and very small foot, of which he seemed

rather vain, as he always wore while on board the ship silk stockings.

Bertie Greathead, an English visitor to Paris in 1803, wrote: 'His person is not only little but, I thought, mean.'

Estimates of his height, ranging from five feet five inches to five feet seven and a half inches, were the guesses of Captain Henry Meynell of *Newcastle*, Major-General Sir Henry Bunbury, who had the delicate task of informing Napoleon of the decision to send him to St Helena, and John R. Glover the Admiral's secretary during the voyage there.

Now of course from the psychological point of view Napoleon's corpulence and ungainly appearance, to which he had to adapt himself, as we have seen, from about the age of thirty-six is of less significance than his height in feet and inches; and here for once the matter can be settled without doubt. He was five feet six inches, as measured by the anatomist Antommarchi at the post-mortem examination. He was therefore slightly above the average height for Frenchmen, and only a little less than the average height of our countrymen in his day. The myth that he was a very small man has been perpetuated by the fact that in many English translations of French memoirs his height is given as about five feet two inches. This is because of failure to translate French measurements correctly into English ones.[3]

It is quite obvious that he did not inevitably convey the impression of being a very small man. As a soldier and as Emperor he effortlessly dominated the scene, whether in a Court, on the battlefield or on a parade-ground. Masséna, one of his most famous marshals and himself a master of military leadership, said that when Napoleon put on his general's hat he seemed to be two feet higher. He walked among the courtiers and crowned heads of Europe with the assurance, if not always with the graciousness, of one born to the purple. Certainly there were many occasions when his calm dignity notably deserted him, but although the picture was occasionally that of a being of terrifying malignity, he never for one moment sounds in the least like the familiar figure of the little 'cock-sparrow' who over-compensates for his small stature by blustering self-assurance and a bullying, aggressive, domineering manner. No; we must look deeper if we are to detect possible sources of feelings of inferiority, and I will start with his nationality which could have affected his character in two distinct ways – directly, because of the Corsican national characteristics,

and indirectly, through his own attitude to his Corsican nationality.

Many aspects of Napoleon's character have been attributed to his Corsican nature, and even to a racial strain variously described as Arab, Berber, Moorish or Libyan. France had annexed Corsica just in time for Napoleon to be born a Frenchman; but annexation could not alter the Corsican character, which was very un-European. The people in that part of Corsica where Napoleon was born are said to have been of North African origin, for Arab peoples seem to have gone to Corsica even before the Saracens. Napoleon himself called Corsica 'a little isle, half African'; and when welcoming Dr Antommarchi to St Helena he spoke proudly of the warlike qualities of the particular type of Corsican from whom he himself was descended. Antommarchi, more Italianate, was in Napoleon's eyes the wrong kind of Corsican. This racial theme is developed at great length by B. Fortescue in his book, *Napoleon's Heritage.*

Some of the Oriental traits which he discerns in Napoleon's make-up are his superstitiousness and love of ghost stories; his profound belief in Destiny, Fate, omens and in his Star. His oft-expressed preference for the Mahommedan faith has usually been assumed to have been politically inspired – 'I was a Mahommedan in Egypt: I shall be a Catholic in France' – but it could have sprung from the Oriental strain. Fortescue asserts that incest was common in Corsica, and Napoleon certainly seemed surprisingly indifferent to accusations of that crime. Corsicans, we are told, are no respecters of rank, which could have helped the young Bonaparte in his dealings with the great ones of Europe. The constant trouble which the Emperor experienced with his family, summed up in his own remark that when he gave a throne to a brother he made one enemy the more, is seen by Fortescue as evidence of the family's Corsican nature – always in power or in revolt.

Finally, the unwritten Arab law of asylum could have led to the bland confidence with which Napoleon cast himself upon the mercy of the most implacable of his enemies; and incidentally to the sense of grievance which tormented him for the rest of his life, at being treated as a prisoner of war instead of being allowed to end his days in dignified retirement in England. An Arab would have regarded this as a perfidious betrayal of one who had sought hospitality.

These racial studies are interesting, but I am convinced that a far more important factor in Napoleon's case was his own attitude to his Corsican nationality, and this was far from consistent at different times of his life, being always strangely ambivalent.

On the surface, Frenchmen are no more ashamed of being Corsican or Alsatian than Britons are of being Scots, Irish, or Welsh; but membership of a minority race in a nation can have strange effects. We Scots have been told that the perfervid Scotsman who plies the English with food and drink on national feast days, in order to subject them to the 'Here's tae us wha's like us' treatment, is exhibiting symptoms of national inferiority; and no doubt similar self-assertiveness on the part of the Irish and Welsh strikes the English as a plant of the same species. I cannot recall being offered so much as a cup of tea on St George's day, and it seems that the English need no such props to sustain their serene conviction of superiority which, they are accustomed to being told, acts as an irritant to other nations, as we have seen that it did to Napoleon.

Nationalistic feelings thrive when far from the homeland, and never can there have been a lonelier expatriate Corsican than little Napoleone Buonaparte who from the age of nine, was for nearly six years the only Corsican boy in the military school at Brienne, hardly ever visited by his parents or by any other Corsicans. Even his name, which he sometimes spelled 'Nabulione', was odd; and the French boys mockingly called him *Paille-au-nez* – straw in the nose. His outbursts of temper naturally aggravated the teasing and bullying to which he was subjected, and this fed his hatred of the other boys, out of which grew contempt for them and their nation. To keep his end up he grew more and more rabidly Corsican, more anti-French, more liable to violence.

He once said to de Bourrienne: 'I will do these French all the mischief I can.' In school reports he was called 'typically Corsican'. Living in France not only made him more Corsican but encouraged him to form a romantic picture of Corsica as a community in which the ideal society visualised by Rousseau truly became a reality. As a young officer he was still very insular, and spent all the time he could in Corsica, overstaying his leave and getting embroiled in local politics and intrigue. Finally he fell foul of the great Paoli, *il babbo*, the Father of Corsica, and antagonised so many of his compatriots that he had to flee to France, having made his island too hot to hold him.

During his anti-French period he became a great admirer of

England, and even thought very seriously of joining the British Navy, as the son of his beloved foster-mother, Camilla Ileri, had done. When he had to leave Corsica he toyed with the idea of joining the British in India; but later we hear of him wanting to go and organise Indian native artillery against the British. But France was then ablaze, and Napoleon, encouraged by his remarkable mother, was quick to realise that there were chestnuts to be pulled out of that fire by a young soldier of fortune who did not mind getting his fingers burned. France, weary of upheaval and instability, and longing for any settled form of government, was ripe for a strong ruler; and Napoleon was later to say: 'France had greater need of me than I of her.'

So the young warrior set his foot in the stirrup of the charger which was to carry him to greater fame than any of the great captains of old, whose stories he loved to read. France may have been his war-horse, but he never truly loved her as a good rider loves his horse. His first great opportunity was when he assumed command of the army of Italy, where his Italian nature and appearance, and his knowledge of the language, were a great help to him. But the more he perceived the dazzling prospects which lay open to him from exploitation of the confusion in the French nation, the more did he realise that if he was to become the ruler for whom the nation was longing he must become a true Frenchman. And just as the process of compensation for the feelings of inferiority of a lone rough little Corsican among the cultured young aristocratic French cadets had driven him to be excessively Corsican, so now the realisation that he could never be or even feel a true Frenchman intensified his strivings to be French.

He made the most of having been born a Frenchman, and changed his name from Buonaparte to Bonaparte[4] but as usual he overdid it all. Frenchmen have said that he always spoke and wrote of France as no real Frenchman ever would; and the Russian writer, Merezhkovsky, quoting his remark 'I have one passion, one mistress – France', commented that men do not speak thus of their native country; to them she is not the mistress but the mother. Arthur Lévy, one of Napoleon's most sycophantic admirers, quotes Merezhkovsky's comment, but waxes indignant at the horrid thought that France's greatest hero was not French. But Lévy had to admit that even Napoleon himself was a little surprised by the intensity of his own feelings on this subject. Napoleon said in St Helena: 'I wanted at all costs to be a

Frenchman. Being called a Corsican was to me the bitterest of insults.' Recalling the tale of the mayor of Lyons who, intending to compliment him, said that it was amazing how greatly he loved France though he was not a Frenchman, he said: 'It was as though he had struck me with a knife.' He was able to identify himself and his interests with France to that high degree which seems to characterise French despots; and he could claim *L'état c'est moi* with even more justification than could Louis XIV, though perhaps with not much more than de Gaulle at the height of his power.

But for all his frequent protestations of love for the French, his feelings about them were really very mixed, and were strangely linked with his feelings about the English. He once said: 'There are only two great nations, France and England; the rest are nothing'; and he had for both nations a curious love-hate relationship. It was not only during his strongly Corsican phase that he expressed contempt for the French. He often compared them adversely with the English. He considered that the English were more practical than the French, and also braver. His judgement on the latter point was: 'I think one can say that in courage they are to us what we are to the Russians, what the Russians are to the Germans, and what the Germans are to the Italians.'

As he had conquered all the others this obviously put Britain at the top of the league. Before going to Elba he spoke feelingly to the British Commissioner: 'Your nation is great, and I have the highest esteem for its people. I have wished to raise the French nation also . . .', and here, Sir Neil Campbell reported, he seemed to become affected and stopped speaking. He showed his feelings even more plainly when he said to General Gourgaud: 'The British Navy would be much less able to carry on the struggle with us if we had but half the English National Spirit.'[5]

Lord Rosebery quoted what he rightly called a noble tribute, which included such expressions as 'the English character is superior to ours', and 'Had I had an English army I should have conquered the universe'. Napoleon implied on one occasion that he thought he could have led English troops better than their own officers; a point on which we may feel considerable doubt.

Lord Rosebery found Napoleon's ignorance about England and the English national character unusual in a man who normally studied his opponents. He could be roused to intense indignation by hostile reports about him in the British papers, which he insisted on having translated for him. He had many stronger

reasons for anger with our country. The British Navy barred his path to world dominion, and before he even heard of Nelson he used to say that Sir Sidney Smith had robbed him of his triumph. Our small army in the Peninsula made of Spain the running sore which weakened his Empire. Our wealth stiffened the opposition of the Continental powers. He loved to repeat Paoli's gibe that we were a nation of shopkeepers, but it led him to the false assumption that we lived by selling and, since he could not prevent his vassals from allowing us to buy, his famous Continental blockade rebounded on his own head. It even caused dissension between him and his brothers who, incomprehensibly to Napoleon, insisted on considering the interests of the people over whom he had set them to rule. For all his admiration of our national character he was not the man to let noble sentiments temper his aggression where an enemy was concerned. His brutal wish that Sir John Moore's army could have been much larger, so that more English mothers might feel the horrors of war, shows what our civilian population could have expected if he could have got at us.

We can dismiss such remarks as wartime propaganda and forget them, for enough has been said to prove that considerations of nationality meant a lot to Napoleon, that his feelings on the subject were strangely mixed, and could have been a source of feelings of inferiority. Even when he was Emperor of the French he knew that he could never be a real true Frenchman; and sometimes he longed for the French to possess certain national characteristics which he ardently admired in the British.

An intriguing sidelight on this question of his nationality was his attitude to the gossip about an alleged liaison between his mother and General Count Marboeuf, the French Governor of Corsica, which was probably just a malicious rumour. Napoleon seems to have almost hoped to prove that this French general was his father, which he thought might account for his passion for military affairs, and might also free him from the fear of cancer from which Carlo Buonaparte had died, and which he believed to be hereditary. It is very likely that he also hoped that it would make him feel more French. Children who are dissatisfied with their homes and families often day-dream about being the offspring of different, and often of noble parents; but such 'fantasy parents' are seldom in the dreams of successful men of thirty, which was Napoleon's age when he finally decided that Carlo Buonaparte had after all been his real father.

Napoleon had really no reason to be ashamed of his father who in 1771 had been recognised as being of noble birth, and later was appointed a deputy in Paris of the Corsican nobility. Many people wrongly believe that Napoleon was of humble origin and rose from the ranks, because of his nickname of 'The Little Corporal', which, like Marlborough's nickname of 'Corporal John', was really a mark of affection by his troops. It has been said that a corporal is almost a comrade; his authority is more or less fraternal.

But although Napoleon could claim to be well-born, tracing his ancestry back to good Ligurian families, it was only Corsican nobility and as he became more and more infatuated with 'blue blood' his reactions became more typical of the *parvenu*, plagued by a deep sense of social inferiority. One of the qualities which gave Josephine such a firm hold on him was the help which her aristocratic connections could give him in his early tentative flirtations with the old French nobility. In his own simile, she was an anchor for his salvation from the isolation which he felt because his rise from the masses had been too sudden.

He had, he said, to keep on throwing out anchors, and these included the new royalty and aristocracy which he created from his family and supporters. It was all amusingly like a series of army postings. When brother Joseph was promoted from being King of Naples to be King of Spain, brother-in-law Joachim Murat was posted to succeed him in Naples. Like War Office generals in the game of General Post they sometimes 'groused' if they thought they were being passed over; though usually, still true to form, it was their wives who did the 'grousing'. Napoleon expected them to abide by what we might call his Standing Orders for Royal Personages; and here it all tended to break down, because his brothers developed strong individual lines of their own, and to his intense annoyance often opposed him, for he was not the only Bonaparte with a will of his own. When their stubbornness exasperated him he used to taunt them with their Corsican blood.

Apart from Napoleon's admission that he felt a sense of isolation because of his sudden rise from the masses, many indications betrayed his deep-seated sense of social inferiority, and it may have been this which led him to resent so hotly the absurdly exaggerated wartime propaganda directed against him and his family. A true aristocrat would have scorned to notice such crude attacks as those of Lewis Goldsmith, who raked up every possible slur on the Bonapartes and poured derision upon them in wildly intemperate language. But the *Dictionary of*

National Biography tells us that 'Napoleon certainly winced under these attacks, and, according to Goldsmith, offered him 200,000 *l* to discontinue them'.

Of course in his zeal for the ennoblement of his family and supporters Napoleon grossly overdid things, like any social climber. 'We nobles,' he would say; and he referred to Louis XVI as 'my poor uncle'. The real aristocrats may have laughed up their sleeves, but there was no laughter in the hearts of genuine Republicans, who saw the goddesses *Fraternité* and *Egalité* follow *Liberté* into oblivion. For example, at one of his state balls in 1812 the *bourgeois* were not only forbidden to dance, but could not even go to the buffet, and waited in their places for footmen to bring refreshments. Claude Manceron is by no means the only historian to call Napoleon a snob. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American philosopher and essayist, wasted few words; Napoleon was 'not a gentleman, but an imposter and a rogue'. The authoress Dormer Creston (Miss Dorothy Colston-Baynes) though less severe, is a staunch and convincing advocate of the theory that Napoleon's vaulting ambition was largely a product of a life-long uneasiness about his social position.

To sum up: Napoleon's medical history revealed clear evidence of a neurotic constitution, and physical signs of a troubled mind. Various factors which could have troubled his mind and nourished his aggressive megalomania have been discussed in this chapter. Our examination of Napoleon's body indicates that, as with many neurotics, the roots of his trouble were probably planted deeply in some form of psychological conflict concerning the sexual instinct. This deserves a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPECTRUM OF SEX

The social or medical treatment of homosexuality is outside the scope of this book, but an understanding of the part which sexual maladjustment might have played in the formation of Napoleon's character may be made easier by a few remarks about male sexuality, which need only be very brief, because the subject is so much discussed nowadays.

'Male and Female created He them,' says the Bible, and it is generally assumed that the words imply male *or* female. But it is possible that the author of Genesis meant exactly what he wrote. The Talmud states: 'Adam and Eve were at first one being'. Early Greek statues of a being compounded of Hermes and Aphrodite show that the world has for centuries known about the existence of the so-called hermaphrodites, who are both male and female. True hermaphrodites are rare, only about eighty cases having been reported in medical literature, but our knowledge of the gradations between male and female bodily development has been greatly enlarged in recent years. Amongst the fortunate majority who have never had reason to doubt that they were completely male or female realisation has slowly grown that there exist the unhappy few who are aware that they do not fully belong to either sex. Their problems are blandly ignored in many medical text-books apart from the more specialised ones, but there has been a spate of articles and case records in medical journals from which doctors can get guidance about the handling of such intricate cases. Intricate they are indeed, for sex is not an affair of any single factor in the complex picture, but a matter of the total personality, depending not only upon the genes, the external genital organs and sex glands or gonads, but also upon the psychological adjustment. An article in a medical journal recently laid down eight criteria which may be used in determining sex or gender, and described cases in which male and female criteria were present in varying proportions, including one in which the doctor

said that the child was a boy but the mother disagreed and reared the child as a girl.*

Difficult medico-legal issues may be raised in such cases, not only concerning the inheritance of titles and property, but social questions including divorce. In the United States the laws vary in different states; and it seems that the law in our own country has not yet defined sex, but this will have to be attempted and it may not be easy. In a curious divorce case involving a 'marriage' between two males, one a transvestist and the other a trans-sexualist, the judge, who was also a doctor, said that he was the first English judge ever called on to decide an individual's sex. (*The Daily Telegraph;* 3rd February 1970.) Having mentioned sex change and, in Chapter Two, suggested that Napoleon possibly lived in the ill-defined territory between the sexes, I must say a little about transvestism and trans-sexualism. One is fairly common; the other quite rare. Transvestism, the desire to wear the clothes of the opposite sex – 'cross-dressing' – is surprisingly common, running second only to homosexuality in the sexual deviation stakes. A comparatively rare group of people, mostly men, share with the transvestist the desire to 'cross-dress' but go much further, because of the intensity of their desire to be accepted as members of the opposite sex. These are the trans-sexualists who provide the cases of so-called change of sex.

The desire to wear all or part of the dress of the other sex leads us to the subject of fetishism, in which sexual feelings are aroused by various objects. The psychologist Wilhelm Stekel tells us that there is not an organ in the human body, not a single article of clothing or of daily use, which may not become the object of fetishism; and that 'Hair and pigtails are preferred objects in the world of the fetishist.' The apparently deranged men who cut off girls' pigtails, and are found to possess a hoard of these, are in the grip of this strange compulsion. In a later chapter we shall see that Pauline Bonaparte, Napoleon's favourite sister, was a foot fetishist. According to Alfred Adler the infant who sucks his toes may become a foot fetishist.

Fetishism merges into the sphere of erogenous zones, though this is not strictly defined as fetishism. Fetishism is very wide-spread and, as for erogenous zones, Stekel assures us that 'every man and every woman has his or her preferred erogenous zones.' Unconscious influences from early childhood play a part in

* Law and Medicine.' H.N. Morse & G.E. Hall. *Journal of the American Medical Association,* Vol 205 No 6 August 5th 1968.

this, and in writing of breast and buttock fetishism psychologists point to the similar rounded smoothness of these areas and the importance of the mother's breast in the infant's early life. Learned discussion of this sexual symbolism has been taken over by the popular Press in more colloquial terms, and we read of 'bosom men and bottom men', the former being the preferred type in the United States, where the ideal is a well-filled sweater. In Latin countries a similarly well-filled pair of slacks must move fast if it is to escape a pinch; and here, as we shall see, Napoleon seems to have run more or less true to type.

Difficulties in adaptation to sex can trouble those whose feet are both firmly planted on one side of the fence, as well as those whose physical equipment is equivocal. In all human beings there are elements of maleness and of femaleness in varying proportions and, just as genetic influences and variations in male and female hormones combine to produce wide variations of physical types, so do psychological mechanisms of great complexity, working within our minds from conscious or unconscious interpretations of environmental influences in childhood, cause variations in our emotional attitude to sex which are as many-hued as the rainbow, with the strongly heterosexual and the strongly homosexual at opposite ends of the spectrum.

In 1948 the American psychologist A.C. Kinsey rather startled the world by his findings that at least four per cent of white males in the United States are exclusively homosexual, and more than one third of all males have had some adult homosexual experience. Some time before the publication of the Kinsey Report another American psychologist had suggested that the tendency of American parents to encourage their children in courtship, or 'dating', at an early age, when our boys are more concerned with football or cricket, springs from a fear of homosexuality, which he believed to be more widespread than was usually supposed at that time. The studies of Kinsey and his co-workers led them to classify men into seven groups, from Group 0, the exclusively heterosexual, to Group 6, the exclusively homosexual. Thus Group 1 is predominantly heterosexual and only incidentally homosexual, and so on. This is a more exact classification calling for more detailed knowledge of the individual, than my own simile of the spectrum.

Kinsey's reference to men being incidentally homosexual indicates a further aspect of the problem, which is that sexual orientation may vary at different times of an individual's life, not

only in the normal process of development, but in accordance with his opportunities for sexual experience at the time; one example being the conditions in prison which can incline a normal male towards homosexual conduct from which he will turn when his life resumes its usual pattern.

Obviously then the problem of homosexuality is not concerned only with the effeminate individuals referred to as 'pansies', often ridiculed on the stage, of whom robustly heterosexual males might say that they 'can spot them a mile off'. In the world of the homosexual some play the active, and some the passive role. To some extent this depends upon whether men possess feminine traits, or women masculine ones. It seems to be established that actively homosexual men can often by some 'sixth sense' recognise potential partners. Opinion is divided about whether homosexual assaults on young children are an important factor in setting them off on the wrong road. One young soldier with whom I had to deal had, like Napoleon's *grand benêt* in Egypt, [1] been ill-used by Arabs; but it transpired that he had not been unwilling; the trouble was that he had not been paid. He told me that he had, when a schoolboy, been homosexually assaulted by a soldier, but admitted that he had always felt more like a girl than a boy, and he had marked masochistic tendencies. As one doctor wrote, these men have long known of their feminine tendencies, may have had experiences at school, and have had to exert themselves to preserve their chastity.

But it is important to realise that, although statistics indicate that a desire for homosexual relations exists in a considerable percentage of the population, a far greater number of men, although homosexual to some extent, have no such desires, but may still be troubled by doubts and fears which are often unnecessary and which may be resolved by seeking medical advice. Homosexuality is in fact a form of immaturity, a failure to progress beyond the stage of development at which such feelings are more or less normal; a deviation developing from the autoerotic or narcissistic phase of the child's development.[2] It has been well defined as 'self-love once removed'. Napoleon had tendencies to which the term narcissism could be applied, and his selfishness could almost be called self-love.[3]

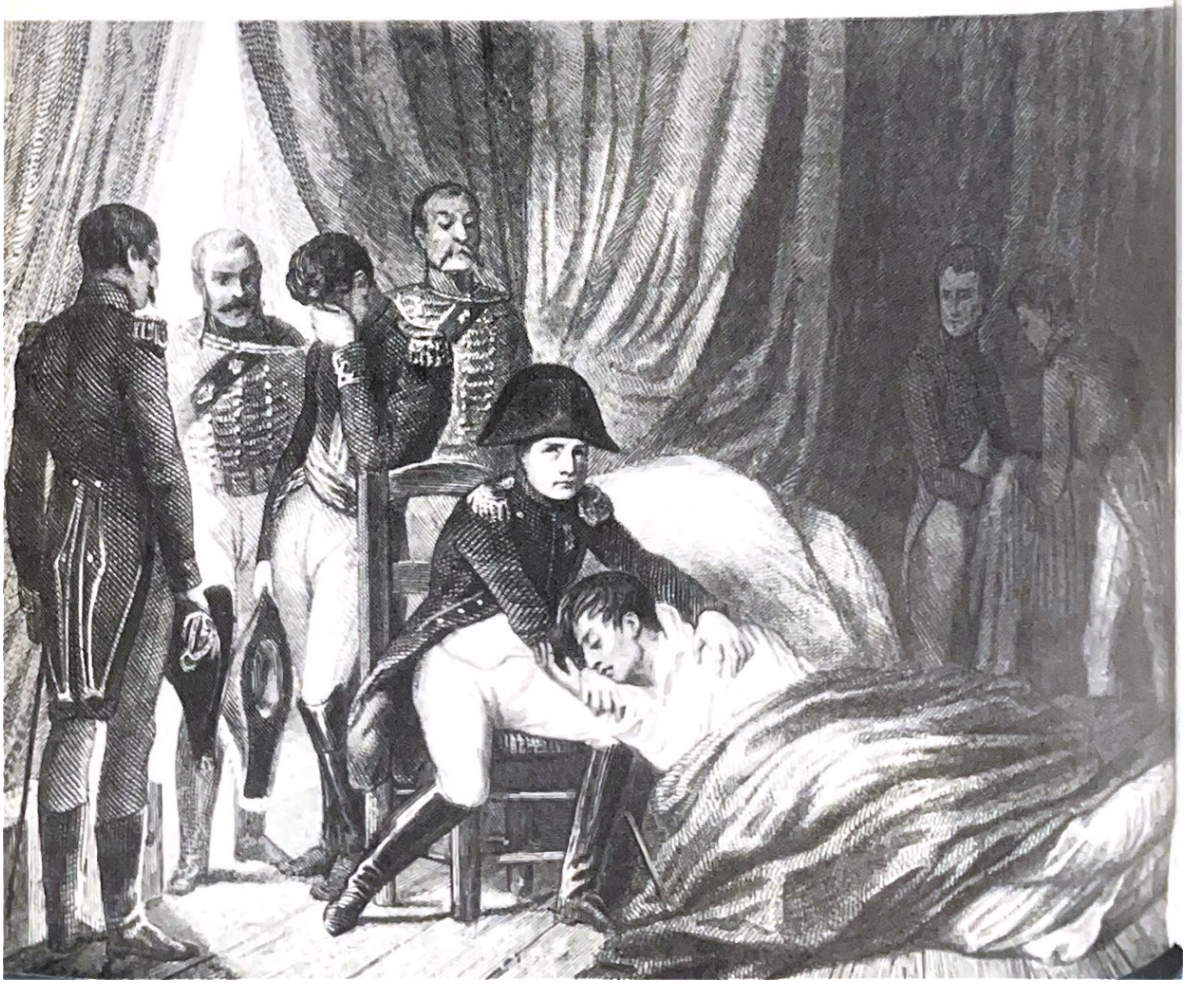
The immaturity leading to homosexuality may be both emotional and physical, but psychological influences are more potent than the genetic inheritance or the effect of hormones. Obviously hypogonadism and an effeminate body such as I have

Napoleon at the military school, 1783
Printed by Auguste Bry

General Armand Augustin Louis de Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza
From an engraving by Hopwood

General Maximilien Sebastien Count Foy
From an engraving by Heliog, Dujardin after a portrait by Gregory, 1816

The Death of Marshal Lannes: Napoleon at Essling
From an engraving by Girardet of a drawing by Raffet



described in Napoleon's case, added to the psychological factors already considered, might be expected to make a man more liable to linger in the immature homosexual phase, and there is in fact statistical evidence in support of this supposition.*

The effects which this kind of body could have had on the development of Napoleon's character and personality are perfectly outlined in one of the basic tenets of Adler's teaching – his theory of Organ Inferiority (*Minderwertigkeit von Organen*, or *Myelo-dysplasia*) which was the seed from which grew his concept of Feelings of Inferiority, and thus eventually the popular, almost too popular, Inferiority Complex.

Adler found that the possession of inferior organs of any sort, any kind of organic deficiency or abnormality, enormously intensifies the normal feeling of weakness, helplessness or inferiority which is experienced by every child in its early development. This leads to a deeply felt sense of inferiority and, in the case of a boy, to the development of feminine traits. As a result there is an intensification of the striving towards an often unattainable goal. Here is how Adler described the psychical development of such children:

> They wish to surpass all others and to accomplish everything alone . . . Insatiable and lusting after the semblance of power they demand proofs of love without ever feeling satisfied (Don Juan; Messalina) †

To the names in brackets I think he might safely have added Napoleon. If the inferiority is in the external genital organs and if there is anything about the boy's body which appears to be less than completely masculine, as in Napoleon's case, then, although this may in Adler's expression 'close the extension of his life-line in the direction of love and marriage', it may also lead to an unconscious exaggeration of all traits which tend to assert his maleness. Again to quote Adler:

> The child, with occasional variations, regards the following as masculine; strength, greatness, riches, knowledge, victory,

* 'Androgyny in Adolescent Psychiatric patients and in Delinquents.' A.S. Henderson & O.P. Dugard. *British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine.* 1967 Vol 22 pp 223-227.

† *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology,* Kegan, Paul, Trench & Trubner 1932.

> coarseness, cruelty, violence and activity as such; their opposites being feminine. He seeks triumph in every human relation.

A great deal of Napoleon's character is crystallised here. Amongst the problems which Adler tells us will face these children as they grow up are psychogenic impotence and a fear of love, marriage and women – all of which, as I shall show, can be discerned in Napoleon's life story.

Mr Cronin describes Napoleon's interest in the importance of testicles and in the subject of castration, and suggests that because of his very small external genital organs he had a 'subsconscious fear of castration' – in other words what Freudians call castration anxiety or a castration complex.

I have preferred to consider the subject in terms of the teaching of Adler, because this seems to be peculiarly applicable to Napoleon's case, and is more easily understood by amateur psychologists.

Whether we follow Freud or Adler there are grounds for supposing that Napoleon's hypogonadism helped to cause the coarseness with which he treated women, and the strain of cruelty in his nature. An example of his sadism was the treatment which he personally ordered for women camp-followers who did not leave the Army when told to do so. They were to be smeared over with soot and exposed for two hours in the market-place. His second wife, Marie Louise, knew all about his sadism. She wrote in her diary that she dreaded his anger, but would sooner die than give him the pleasure of witnessing her pain by crying on account of his reproaches.

Napoleon's sadism did not confine itself to mere verbal attacks. There is abundant evidence of less subtle, more direct, manifestations of this tendency. He simply could not keep his hands off people, and men, women and children all suffered from his slappings, pinchings, and pulling of ears, noses and hair. Were it not for countless personal descriptions of such experiences in contemporary memoirs, written by friend or foe, adorers and haters of the great man, this curious habit or foible would be unbelievable. It was something quite separate from his violent rages, such as the one in which he struck his head groom, Jardin, across the face with a riding whip, and later had to give him three thousand francs in consolation. It was a habit from which Napoleon derived a curious sensual pleasure, and, as he grew more

powerful and the victims could not resist but accepted his assaults with resignation, so did the habit grow upon the Emperor, until it seemed that he hardly knew he was giving way to it.

The Emperor's personal servants had to submit to this treatment very frequently, daily in fact as the seventeen year old Mameluke Roustam found after joining the general's entourage in Egypt. He was pinched and slapped until his eyes filled with tears. His successor, the young valet St Denis, was to say that the slaps on the back were accompanied by 'agreeable expressions', such as 'My son, my boy, my child'; and he wrote: 'What would one not do for such a master?' Many others almost welcomed the curious treatment with gratification at being noticed at all.

But some people were not so complacent about these assaults, as they could be called in a police court today, if the victims chose to complain. Dr Hallé, for example, protested violently, left the room in indignation and was thereafter left alone. He probably discerned what lay behind Napoleon's physical assaults, and so in fact did one or two perceptive men who were not doctors. The youthful Marcellin Marbot[4] realised that the Emperor's handling 'was with him a kind of caress'; and in his memoirs he referred to the habit of ear-pinching as 'the flattering caress which he always employed to persons with whom he was pleased.' Constant Wairy, the valet with the longest service with Napoleon, realised that it kept his master happy and was therefore worth enduring in the interests of peace and quiet. His evidence is convincing and suggestive.

> From personal experience I can affirm that he used to pinch not merely the tip but the whole of the ear, sometimes catching hold of both of them at once in quite masterly fashion. Sometimes when I came in to dress him he would rush at me with his favourite greeting of 'Hullo you rascal', and pinch both my ears at once, making me scream. Not infrequently he added sundry slaps adroitly applied, whereupon I was sure to find him excellently good-tempered for the whole day – considerate and charming as he alone could be.

By thus emphasising that the Emperor's advances, though painful, were essentially playful, Constant re-inforced his emphatic denial that Napoleon used to beat his servants. He said that he knew of only two instances of this, and both in his opinion were justified.

But for an Emperor to beat his servants, even if it *was* only twice, is not my idea of a well balanced personality; and I can recall only two other leaders who did so, and both though 'great' were undoubtedly homosexual – Alexander the Great and Frederick the Great.

Josephine's lady's-maid, Mademoiselle Avrillon learned, like Constant, to gauge the Emperor's good humour by the amount of pain caused by the tweaks and slaps which he bestowed upon the Empress and her maids indiscriminately; and she added that he did not realise what pain he caused them. Ladies at Court were reduced to tears, their noses made to bleed, and even generals suffered. General Junot's ear was once pulled until it bled, and his hair was pulled so hard that his face was all bloody.

I have said that Napoleon loved children, but showed a curious streak of cruelty in his dealings with them. He was strongly attracted to children and many of them liked him, but they were often victims of his pinches and slaps. He did not spare quite small babies, not even his own adored son, whom the actor Talma was once surprised to find him slapping repeatedly, because, said Napoleon, it amused him to be spanking a king! His little nephew Achille Murat had his ears pulled so hard that he cried, whereupon Napoleon pulled them still harder, and when the child flew into a rage he dealt him a really heavy blow on the face which sent him staggering into the arms of a bystander. The boy's mother fainted, and the Emperor stalked off with some comment about not spoiling children. Napoleon's friendship with the fourteen year old Betsy Balcombe in St Helena, which will be described later, was marred by some rather malicious teasing, and really painful pulling of her nose and recently pierced ears.

Napoleon's entourage must have been quite relieved when his aggression and sadistic impulses were expended upon animals, such as Josephine's swans, or the hens, sheep, goats and cows in his garden in St Helena, at which it amused him to shoot.[5] The curious physical contacts constantly sought by Napoleon link his sadism with indications of fetishism. The significance of his predilection for noses is considered in discussion of his homosexual leanings.

Monsieur Guy Breton who tells us that shapely rumps set Napoleon's palms itching, is not the only author to hint that Napoleon's interest was aroused by that particular erogenous zone, but he harps on the theme with remarkable persistence. Napoleon, we gather, was a connoisseur of 'a plump and well-placed rump',

and his eyes would follow 'the waggling behind of some passing beauty'. Monsieur Breton depicts Napoleon 'cheerfully violating court damsels with attractive bottoms', and he even tells us, (on what authority one is tempted to wonder,) that the Emperor was disappointed when Queen Maria Luisa of Spain did not prove to possess 'the provoking bust and enticing rump' which his imagination had pictured. In his book *Patterns of Psychosexual Infantilism* Wilhelm Stekel writes: 'Many buttock fetishists become sexually aroused at the mere sight of a well-formed backside'. Bisexual men with homosexual tendencies, such as I shall show were present in Napoleon's character, tend to be attracted by girls of a boyish appearance, and like to see them in trousers. Napoleon's first mistress habitually wore hussar uniform with elegant white pantaloons. Whether his palms itched or not, he made a curious comment about Josephine when talking to Bertrand in St Helena: 'She had the prettiest little backside imaginable – on it could be seen the three islets of Martinique'. (*Les Trois Ilets* was the name of Josephine's home in Martinique.)

Let the Freudians make what they can of that little joke. Was it merely rather undignified for an Emperor to make such a point of the attractiveness of his first Empress's behind (and this was not the only occasion on which he spoke of it) or could it have had some deeper significance?

(Monsieur Breton does not follow the story as far as Napoleon's second marriage, so we may never learn what the Emperor thought of Marie Louise's anatomy.)

Among sexual neurotics or persons of weak sexuality aggression sometimes takes symbolic forms, such as the cutting off of women's hair, throwing ink on their clothes or otherwise defiling them, openly or surreptitiously. Instances of this sort of curious conduct occurred at the outset of three of Napoleon's affairs with mistresses.

At his first meeting with Pauline Fourès he deliberately upset a cup of coffee over her dress; and exactly the same thing happened some seven years later to Eléonore Denuelle. When he first met Mademoiselle George he tore off her veil and trampled it upon the floor. There may be perfectly simple explanations for these acts. The spilled coffee may have been a device to get acquainted with Pauline, who was sent to change her dress in Napoleon's room. No such sequel to the mishap in Eléonore's case is mentioned by Hector Fleischmann, who ascribes the incident to 'a piece of clumsiness'. The destruction of Mademoi-

selle George's veil could have been intended to demonstrate that Napoleon meant to supplant her elderly Polish protector, Prince Sapieha, who had given her the veil. But these inelegant preludes to courtship could have been unconsciously designed to assert the virility of which he had secret doubts.

There are stories of encounters with young married couples which suggest that he may have been led into a subtle brand of cruelty by envy of their happiness and love for one another. Jealousy can lead to a desire to be hurtful. For example, when he met Laure Junot just after her marriage he was so mean as to ask if she knew about the harem which her husband had kept in Egypt. It was particularly mean-spirited and lacking in finer feelings to make such a remark to a woman whom he had known as a child, and whose husband was one of his most devoted followers. Andoche Junot had been Napoleon's first aide-de-camp, and his career had prospered along with that of his hero, for whom he had a profound admiration.

Another young couple figured in a story which Bonaparte told to Madame de Bourrienne. A devoted young wife, visiting her husband for one day at Toulon, begged the general to exempt him from duty as he had had a strong premonition of death. Madame de Bourrienne described the charming but savage gaiety and exultation with which Bonaparte spoke of his stern refusal to be moved by the poor girl's tears; and the horrible minuteness with which he told how the young husband had been cut in two by a bomb. One version of this story adds that Napoleon 'laughed heartily as he named the part which was taken off.'

Feminine intuition may have given Madame de Bourrienne an inkling of the deep springs of jealousy from which the exultant laughter was welling, for she said that this was 'one of those specimens of fierce hilarity which I greatly dislike and which prejudice me against him'. We may share her prejudice; but our distaste for this unpleasant side of Napoleon's character can be tempered by understanding if we believe that it may have been to some extent a reflection of his failure to achieve perfect happiness in family life. After his second marriage he told Metternich that he had always yearned for a home and that his longing had now become a reality. But it was not to last for long, and to achieve it he had had to suffer prolonged mental torment in deciding to divorce the companionable Josephine.

His own lack of success seemed to stimulate an inordinate inquisitiveness about other people's married lives, and he would

ask them extremely personal questions. He had a mania for arranging, and indeed for dis-arranging marriages. His meddling often had most unhappy results, not only in his own family but among his subjects, whom he seemed to treat as a human stud-farm whereby he could vicariously gratify his own desire to establish a family.

As the effective head of the Bonaparte family on which he was determined to found a dynasty he naturally concerned himself with the marriages of his brothers and sisters; and in his zeal for the creation of his 'instant aristocracy' he made noble heiresses marry his parvenu generals, and tried to marry his younger officers into the old aristocracy. General Rapp was repeatedly told: 'It is my wish that you should marry,' and was finally given two ladies to choose from. In his memoirs Rapp wrote sadly: 'My marriage was brought about, but unfortunately it did not prove a happy one.'

Napoleon's marriage market catered even for his valets. When engaging Marchand as his premier *valet-de-chambre* after Constant's desertion, he said: 'I will look after you. I will marry you.' Another valet, Etienne St Denis, managed to arrange his own marriage in St Helena, to Miss Hall, governess to the Bertrand family. When in due course she became pregnant, Napoleon teased St Denis unmercifully, telling him that an ugly Chinaman had been making love to his wife in his absence. 'You think the child will be yours? . . . You'll be nicely caught won't you, if she produces an ugly, dirty little Chinaman?' What are we to think of a great man who could stoop to this sort of thing with his valet?

Of course he had to rule everyone's lives, to have a finger in every pie. Some of his everlasting prying and meddling in the matrimonial affairs of others may have been genuine kindly interest – the desire which married people often show to push bachelors into marriage. He might even have wanted to help them to find the genuine happiness which somehow eluded him. But I do not think we can entirely acquit him of the charge that it may have been a form of voyeurism, a characteristic failing of men of weak sexuality, which, contrary to popular belief, is I think the kind of man Napoleon was. His own admissions and the revelations of Josephine clearly imply that of the symptoms of Organ Inferiority detailed by Adler the most important one to Napoleon was impotence, which is discussed in my next chapter.

Consideration of Napoleon's nervous ischuria, reported by the observant Dr Yvan was deferred to this point because of its

possible association with Organ Inferiority, which according to Adler, leads to urinary trouble, such as difficulty in passing water especially in public. Many observers described Napoleon's difficulty in passing water, and how, when unable to do so, he would stand for long periods with his forehead pressed against a wall or the breech of a gun. He himself said, about his bladder: 'That is my weak point. I shall perish from that.' Instead of invoking an abstruse psychological mechanism to account for Napoleon's bladder troubles it might be easier to join the ranks of the medical writers who have attributed his dysuria to some physical cause, such as stones in the bladder, schistosomiasis or some form of venereal infection. It seems unlikely that the small calculi, or gravel, found in his bladder at the autopsy could have been present for many years without growing larger or causing serious kidney trouble.

Perhaps Napoleon incurred the risk of venereal infection, and if he did suffer from such a condition history might have preserved a discreet silence, whilst his doctors would have been bound by professional secrecy. The only evidence of which I am aware is in the report of one of the Allied Commissioners who were taking him to Elba, that Napoleon was suffering from an 'amatory complaint', for which he applied treatment in the presence of the Commissioners without reserve. But the Prussian, Count Truchsess von Waldburg, who made the statement, was such a hostile witness that I would not care on his evidence alone to support an unsavoury allegation which otherwise rests entirely on innuendo and tittle-tattle. Dr Hillemand wisely points out that, as Napoleon was counting on Marie Louise joining him in Elba, he would hardly have allowed the Commissioners to see that he was suffering from any such complaint. If von Truchsess saw anything it was probably Napoleon having his usual trouble in passing water.

I reject also the allegations of unbridled lust and various sexual perversions which were made against Napoleon. It was an age in which no holds were barred in political satire, and Napoleon seems to have paid little heed to the scandal-mongering, which probably grew from envy of the astounding heights to which he had raised himself and many of his relatives. There is certainly no need to peep through keyholes or lend an ear to scandal for an insight into the great man's private life. Thriving on the world's attention he had an irrepressible urge to write, dictate, and to talk and talk and talk about anything which interested him, which meant everything

but especially himself. It is this which makes it possible to compile his 'case history', and to hazard an opinion about the psychological influences which helped to mould his character. Before summarising the factors which have emerged in this chapter and the previous one, and the deductions to which they have led me, I must emphasise that, since psychology is by no means an exact science, it is understandable that interpretations of their significance should vary. A picture which pleases one critic may be a meaningless daub to another, so it is not surprising that no historical or psychological portrait of Napoleon completely satisfied the biographer Jacques Bainville. Whilst agreeing with him that Napoleon cannot be confined within the dimensions of any circumscribed psychological portrait, I believe that shafts of light, illuminating a corner here and there, can be directed upon the vast canvas by the disciples of each one of the triumvirate – Freud, Jung, and Adler.

Since Freud revealed the influence of the unconscious mind upon the formation of our personalities it has been impossible to doubt its profound significance. For Jung it was our common inheritance from our ancestors, the collective or racial unconscious mind, which came to acquire particular importance, and for his followers the key to Napoleon's mind need perhaps be sought only in the Corsican character, and in the various racial springs which have contributed to its development. All psychologists recognise the importance of environmental and parental influences in our earliest years, and Napoleon's family background, with a weak father and dominant mother, was typical of that which according to Freud produces homosexual sons.

There are ample indications that he was of a neurotic disposition, and possible causes of neurosis and emotional disturbance were feelings of inferiority, arising less from his height than from such factors as his curiously ambivalent attitude to his Corsican birth. Aggressiveness caused by such feelings of inferiority was intensified by the psychological mechanisms which affect second sons, and perhaps by being replaced as the baby of the family at the sensitive age of six.

But the picture is dominated by the Organ Inferiority associated with his feminine build and hypogonadism, from which Adler's teaching would lead us to expect him to experience psychological impotence, fear of love, women and marriage, and an exaggeration of traits which the unconscious mind associates with maleness, such as strength, power, cruelty and coarseness. As an example of

over-compensation Adler was fond of pointing out that Demosthenes, who stuttered, forced himself to become the greatest orator in Greece. The feminine build, or gynandromorphy, revealed at the post-mortem examination, could have been the unconscious spur which drove Napoleon to play the part of a great lover and seducer, which is the röle many people believe he did play.

Now, after some rather didactic excursions into the field of psychological theorisation, we can return, with relief perhaps, to the story of Napoleon and again allow him to speak for himself.

CHAPTER V

NAPOLEON AND WOMEN

Alfred Adler taught that a well-integrated personality, a normal happy man, must be adjusted to the claims of three things – society, occupation and sex – or in other words, to social life, his job and love.

From Napoleon's history and from our physical and psychological examination we have drawn some conclusions about the kind of man he was. He dominated society, and was never in much doubt that he had chosen the job for which he was suited. But what about sex, and the ability to love? It is this adjustment which many people find the most difficult of the three, and so it was in Napoleon's case.

In dealing with Napoleon's relations with women I will not attempt to cover in detail the extremely varied field. This has already been done, first by the French scholar, Frédéric Masson, who studied every aspect of Napoleon's life and character. With all the advantage of many journals and letters discovered since Masson's day the subject has been more exhaustively surveyed by Gertrude Aretz in Germany (1927), by R.F. Delderfield, an English authority on the Napoleonic era (1959) and by Guy Breton in France (1965).

When Mr Delderfield says in his book *Napoleon in Love*, that 'There is a curious sterility about his love affairs, and only two of them seem to have influenced his character to any appreciable degree', he is not of course speaking about sterility in the medical sense with which I have been concerned; but, in elaborating his theme, and incidentally giving us a wonderful picture of Napoleon's love-life in a nutshell, he poses a highly significant question:

> He was a superb administrator with the supreme quality, entirely absent in most organisers, of inspiring the unswerving devotion of millions of men. Men! His genius fell away

altogether when he came to deal with women, and his record in this field is strangely pitiful. He paid court to women of every type. He was passionate lover to a few, a tolerant husband to two, and a generous friend and protector to scores. They repaid him with, at best, the dutiful compliance of a Victorian wife, at worst black treachery and shameless ingratitude . . . . Why was it that Napoleon could inspire men to die blessing him without being capable of inspiring more than a tepid self-seeking affection in the hearts of women?*

Napoleon's magnetic power to inspire men, and the methods by which he deliberately cultivated it, have been described in Chapter One. Now, if we are to find the answer to Mr Delderfield's question, we must examine his relations with women. In this chapter I will deal mainly with women in general, and in the next two chapters with some of the women with whom his name has been associated – his wives, sweethearts and mistresses.

The late Mr Shaw Desmond, a prolific writer about sex, considered that the love personality of Napoleon is one of the most elusive phenomena in history, and certainly the literature on the subject is baffling in its extensiveness and in the contradictory opinions which it contains. But, as usual, we are lucky that so many of Napoleon's own statements have been recorded. Among the many subjects on which he pontificated as Emperor none received more attention than the relations between men and women – love, marriage, and divorce. His youthful reflections are to be found in his diaries and other writings. He was positively obsessed with the subject and in much of what he said and wrote about women, and in his conduct towards many of them, there is evidence of that 'unconscious tendency to revenge against the opposite sex' described by Wilhelm Reich.

Beginning fairly mildly when he was about seventeen or eighteen with: 'I consider love to be harmful both to Society and to private happiness', he soon worked himself up to diatribes against women in a scornful and contemptuous vein. The Oriental attitude to women, he said, was better than ours; and he defended the practice of polygamy on the crude grounds that a wife is no use to her husband when she is pregnant, or nursing her children, or ill, and she ceases to be his wife when she can no longer have children. He certainly lacked the gallantry to women which is associated with the French, and he said that women received too

* Hodder & Stoughton, 1959.

much attention in France, and should not be treated as men's equals but as slaves, 'mere machines to make children'. He gave it as his opinion that 'women's duties are submission and dependence.'

The misogynistic nature indicated by such language came to the surface in many harsh encounters with women, who were left with ruffled feelings, and often in tears, by his abominable rudeness. Criticisms of their dress, hair-style, make-up and general appearance; comments on the fact that they had not yet secured husbands, or if they were married that they had not had children, were expressed with a lack of delicacy, a coarse familiarity, or even a positive vulgarity, which astound and disgust our own more well-mannered generation. Even in those rougher days a lady surely did not go to Court expecting an Emperor to ask if her unattractive appearance was due to being pregnant; to tell her that she looked like a corpse and should use more rouge; that her hair was a fright, her arms too red, that she looked like a washerwoman; or to ask with a very pointed stare if she was able to nurse her children. All these unpleasantnesses and many many more were perpetrated by the Emperor Napoleon. He would ask young unmarried girls if they had had any children, and would taunt married women with having a fine time when their husbands were in the field. 'Goodness! I heard you were pretty', was an awkward observation for a young lady to receive calmly on her first appearance at Court. The tales of Napoleon's rudeness to women could fill many pages.

One famous woman – Germaine De Staël – eager to admire, was soon converted into a formidable foe. Napoleon disliked, perhaps even feared, intellectual women, and, as intellect was Madame de Staël's long suit, she was not well pleased when Napoleon told her that he considered that the greatest woman was she who had most children. She grew to detest him, and although herself a great talker, she was for once speechless when Napoleon stopped in front of her at Court and said: 'No doubt you nursed your children yourself.' After a pause he went on, remarking to his brother Lucien – 'You see she doesn't want to say yes or no.' But he was always curious to know what she had been saying about him.

She was fascinated by his personality and she probably deserved the rebuffs which she received, culminating in her exile from France, for she could be a most embarrassing person to those whom she admired. She almost made a cult of embarrassing

people. Speculation ran wild about what inspired her strange remark, when she had forced her way into the First Consul's room in the Rue Chantereine whilst he was in his bath – 'Genius has no sex.' Thought by some to have been a comment on his anatomy, it seems far more likely to have been intended to relieve his embarrassment. But she was very curious about his attitude to women, and once asked him outright if it was true that he did not love women. His reply – 'Madame, I love my wife' – delighted her, and she said: 'Epaminondas would have answered me thus.'

Napoleon's abominable rudeness did not spare even Josephine, whom he loved as much as he was capable of loving. It may be stretching a point to include in the catalogue of his cruelties to her the malicious glee with which he caused the horses drawing her *calèche* to be whipped up to a wild gallop over appalling roads and through deep fords, in order to gloat over her nervous terror. Nasty remarks about the paint and powder which his ageing wife used to preserve her fading charms were too deliberate, and too public, to be forgiven.

His conduct in desecrating the shrine of her greatest happiness, her beloved Malmaison, was especially horrid. In his well-recognised mania for destruction he would slash and uproot valuable plants in her hot-house, and shoot at rare wildfowl on the lake. But the most execrable example of his cruelty was the remark which he made publicly when one day he had wanted to take some guests to shoot at the animals in the park. Josephine tearfully protested, saying: 'All the animals are with young; it is not the season for shooting.' Her loving husband said roughly that he must give up his plan, adding: 'It seems that everything is prolific here – except Madame.'

Chivalrous French courtiers hardly knew where to look on many such occasions. Most of the victims of his gross discourtesy seem to have suffered it in embarrassed silence; but a certain duchess, who had rather reluctantly become one of Josephine's ladies-in-waiting, neatly turned the tables on the boorish Corsican who so ardently longed to be thought French. He had referred to the fact that her face was badly pitted by smallpox, and was tartly told – 'A *Frenchman* could never have told me so!'

One young lady of easy virtue, with no position at Court to lose, also answered back boldly. 'I believe you are fond of men', remarked the Emperor to her sarcastically. 'Yes – when they are polite!'

Napoleon, with his magnetic power to charm men, could if he

chose be charming to women also, but the many women he did not choose to charm naturally felt bitter about his rudeness and boorishness, and spread the belief that he was a woman-hater. Claire de Rémusat, the attractive wife of a Court chamberlain, who spent many years at Court, summed it up by saying: 'The Emperor despises women; he cannot learn to love them.' She said that she had never heard him say an amiable word to any of the ladies of the Court, and she believed that it was his constant desire to inspire fear which prevented him from establishing truly friendly intimate relations with anyone. Madame de Rémusat may have been a little prejudiced, for at one time there had been quite a tender relationship between them, and she had seen with pain the pleasant young man she thought she knew grow morose, self-centred and suspicious. But Napoleon himself admitted that he had had to surround himself with an aura of fear to prevent familiarity after his too rapid rise to royal dignity.

Towards the end of his life he boasted that he had never allowed himself to be ruled by a woman. In fact he had always been very much afraid of being dominated by some woman who would take advantage of the sentimental side of his nature. Josephine knew all about that side of him, and she said that he was weaker and more sensitive than anyone supposed. Her daughter Hortense, who gave her stepfather unstinted selfless devotion, was bold enough to tell him outright that he underestimated the influence which women had over men, but told him 'Women are not for you, because you do not take enough trouble to be nice to them'.

He concealed his sentimentality by pretending to be sensual and unsentimental, and by his rudeness he kept scheming woman at arm's length. Frédéric Masson thought that Napoleon's brusqueness and coarse talk were assumed in order to conceal the embarrassment which he felt in the presence of women. Other historians have also believed that his rudeness was camouflage for a basic timidity with women.

Napoleon himself said: 'My character renders me extremely timid in their company'. He once said: 'Love is not for me; I am not as other men.' In St Helena he was even more precise and self-revealing. A conversation between Las Cases and Napoleon was recorded in the memoirs of Count Horace de Viel Castel, a popular diarist of the Second Empire:

I often talked about the Emperor with Monsieur de Las

Cases . . . he told me that at St Helena Napoleon used to speak sometimes of his feebleness in the game of love; it did not amount to much. (*sa faiblesse dans le déduit d'amour; ç'était fort peu-de-chose.*)

Faiblesse dans le deduit d'amour – was this an avowal of his fears of impotence?

Napoleon, a compulsive talker about himself, chose for this confidence the least impressive of the nonentities amongst whom he ended his days. Countal Emmanuel Augustin Dieudonné Martin-Joseph de las Cases, an insignificant though aristocratic little secretary, as short as his name was long, had at the end of Napoleon's career insinuated himself into the Emperor's household, hysterically proclaiming devotion, and carrying flattery, it was said, so far as to be shorter than his hero.

Such a confession recorded by such a person may have little significance, but it was not the only evidence of Napoleon's obsession with the subject of impotence; and I am prepared to believe it because of the evidence which I have recorded about Napoleon's physical and mental make-up.

Wilhelm Stekel in his mammoth work *Impotence in the Male* notes the association of Napoleon's 'hypertrophic ambition' with the 'strikingly small, infantile, undersized genitals' revealed at the post-mortem examination.

Impotence, or the fear of it which is much more than ninety per cent of the problem, is a cause of much marital unhappiness and unnecessary celibacy; and Stekel sees it as the great problem of modern civilisation, though paradoxically he thinks that the erotic life of our time is richer than that of primitive man, amongst whom it was governed by periods of rut, as with animals. Impotence is preponderantly a psychological, not a physical, disability, as Napoleon clearly implied when he wrote: '*Quant à l'impotence elle n'est jamais assez absolue qu'elle puisse deviner une prétence contre la légitimité de l'enfant.*' He wrote several *procès verbaux* on the subject, in one of which he said that it was unheard of for a husband to bring forward his own impotence to prove the illegitimacy of his child. In another he said: 'If the husband is impotent and admits it, it is as much as to say that he is fortunate that another has been found to beget a child for him' – an innuendo which he was inordinately careful to avoid at the time of the birth of the King of Rome.

Now, all this concern with such a human problem was perfectly

understandable in the lawgiver of France, and could not be put forward as an indication of his own fears of impotence, were it not for the fact that the Emperor's impotence aroused widespread interest, rumour and speculation throughout Europe, and was even discussed by Napoleon himself in his family circle with surprising freedom. So convinced do they all seem to have been that he was impotent that in the course of the frequent Bonaparte family debates about naming Napoleon's heir the possibility of a child of his own was never even considered. He does not seem to have resented this attitude, and once said to his elder brother Joseph: 'I am childless, you all think me impotent, and Josephine despite her anxiety is not likely to bear children now; so after me the deluge.' In his brother Lucien's version of this odd family discussion Napoleon's comment on Josephine reads: 'She will have no more children, even if she is willing to have them by another man'. This tends to confirm the existence of the plot to foist a substituted child on the French people as Napoleon's heir.

The memoirs of his step-daughter Hortense make it plain that she and her mother Josephine often discussed the prospect of Napoleon becoming a father. After a stormy scene with Josephine about his affairs with mistresses, when he still hoped to avoid facing up to divorce, Napoleon told her that she need not worry about him seriously falling in love, as she ought to know that he was 'not made for love' and his affections were never seriously involved.

The Bonapartes detested Josephine so intensely that they would have welcomed any evidence that it was she and not Napoleon who was to blame for the infertility of the marriage. It is generally accepted that it was to obtain such evidence that his sister Caroline and her husband Joachim Murat contrived the liaison between Napoleon and Eléonore Denuelle which is described later. Before Napoleon's somewhat dubious acceptance of Eléonore's child as his own had removed the last objection to divorcing Josephine, he had proposed to adopt as his heir the oldest son of his brother Louis and Hortense, despite strenuous protests by Louis, who said: 'Such a favour from you to this child would revive rumours that you are his father.'

These rumours about the child's paternity had made Hortense's relations with her husband most difficult; and, although it is hard to believe this, it was actually from Napoleon himself that she first heard of the scandal. She was horrified, and all the more so because Napoleon was quite pleased about it for reasons of State,

and seemed to think that she ought to be flattered rather than distressed. He had tried to persuade Josephine that the rumours were due to the wish of the public that he should have a child. Hortense's feelings mattered little to him. Far from being worried about the scandal he was positively delighted; and was still chatting gaily about it in St Helena. Napoleon, though tolerant of the loose morals of others, was very careful of the reputation of his own family circle, and he would surely never have allowed, far less spread abroad, this suggestion of impropriety if it had not helped to counter the rumours about his own impotence, which he knew to be current in France.

It is not surprising that Napoleon's impotence should have been a topic of conversation in the Army. His almost defiant exhibition of his curious body to Antommarchi has already been described. On campaigns he bathed outside his tent in sight of his troops. Soldiers are quick to form their own conclusions in such matters, and no doubt the guess-work and gossip gained substance from forthright comments like that of the soldier who laughed at a comrade's question if the Emperor had any children, saying: 'You fool, don't you know that he keeps his private parts in his head?' Caulaincourt attributed this remark to a grenadier in the camp at Boulogne. Bertrand, who said it was made by a soldier in Italy, called it 'an old joke'. This old joke is told in more than one book, and sometimes in bawdier language; but it is significant that Caulaincourt's version of it reads: '*F – bête, ne sais tu pas qu'il a ses amours dans la tête*'? Love affairs in the head' – this seems to endow the legendary soldier with more delicacy, and far deeper perception.

I have expressed the view that Napoleon lacked a sense of humour, and certainly books about him do not offer many openings for humour. By a happy chance a sample of the quiet sense of fun of Mr Maurice Wiggin, the television critic of *The Sunday Times*, has a distinct bearing on Napoleon's sexual difficulties:

> 'Ninety-two per cent of all men worry that their penises are too small' said an American sociologist-psychologist in 'Man Alive's' piece 'The Naked Ego'. Not 93 per cent, nor 91 per cent, as you used to believe in your happy-go-lucky way. I do love the categorical precision of these holy stumble bums who go around catechising 'representative samples' of the hapless population and cross-fertilising their statistics to

produce ever more garish freak blossoms of wisdom and delight.*

I think Mr Wiggin was quite right to poke fun at those who churn out statistics based upon a section of the population who are prepared to discuss their intimate affairs; and indeed some such objections were raised about the Kinsey Report. But whatever we may think of this particular 'stumble bum', the human problem which he disclosed is a real one. Having been educated at a Scottish public school where we all swam stark naked in the river, I was a little surprised, when for the first time as a very new Army doctor I dashed happily into an Indian river with more than a hundred naked soldiers, to see how many of them used one or both hands 'fig-leaf in lieu of', as the quartermaster might have put it.

Maturing experience taught me that such a simple sign of modesty could betray an underlying anxiety. I recall one young soldier who believed quite mistakenly that his body was inadequately masculine. He told me that he never undressed in daylight, and waited in the barrack-room until 'Lights out' before undressing and getting into bed. Napoleon, whose hypogonadism was really something to worry about, seems to have been without prudery, but we shall see in due course how it may have complicated his search for a wife.

Gossip about Napoleon's impotence certainly spread widely, if clandestinely, in France, and naturally the ripples spread into enemy and allied countries, where they were received with malicious glee. The most illustrious of all the speculators about Napoleon's sexual potency were the Russian Imperial family.

When Napoleon decided to marry a second wife his choice fell upon a young Russian grand-duchess. Such a marriage would cement his friendship with the Tsar Alexander. A *ukase* of Tsar Paul had given the Dowager Empress entire control over her daughters' marriages; and she was determined not to allow this one, because she had heard that Napoleon was 'not as other men'.

'What,' said the Dowager Empress, 'shall I marry my daughter to a man who can be husband to nobody? Another man will then come into my daughter's bed if they want her to have children . . . she is not made for that.'

She is known to have had inquiries made about this delicate matter in France, by the Crown Prince Frederick Louis of

* *The Sunday Times*, 11th January 1970.

Mecklenburg-Schwerin.[1] He carried out his task with so little finesse that Talleyrand advised the Emperor to dismiss him from Court. His report confirmed the Dowager Empress's 'repugnance' to the proposed marriage, and fortified her in her arguments with her son the Tsar, who had been inclined to say that it was all just scurrilous gossip. Now she could assure him that it was Josephine herself who had coined the cruel little quip, *Bon-a-parte est bon-à-rien*, and that she had described her husband's incapacity in crude and indelicate terms. Napoleon might look like other men, she had said, but so did Crescentini the *castrato* tenor, and he could produce *nothing*. She had repudiated suggestions that she was responsible for the infertility of the marriage by pointing out that she had had children during her first marriage, and had still been comparatively young when she had married Napoleon, who had been *no use at all*, and was able to do *nothing*. (These remarks were recorded in General Bertrand's Journal, and the italics are his.)

When discussing the threatened divorce she had told Fouché of her doubts of Napoleon's ability to father a child, even with a new wife, to which Fouché replied that someone would see to it that he did have children. This was of course the kind of situation to which the Dowager Empress had no intention of exposing her daughter.

It may not have been only from Josephine or other members of the Court circle that the Dowager Empress' envoy had heard the spicy tales about the impotent Emperor, for such talk was general currency in France. Anyhow, the reports from France convinced the Tsar that his mother had been right after all, and when Caulaincourt, the French ambassador, pointed out that Napoleon had had a son by Marie Walewska, Alexander refused to accept this as evidence, saying that everyone knew what young Polish women were like, and she had probably had other lovers. Napoleon himself, when telling his brother Lucien that Count Walewski, the husband of this favourite mistress, was impotent, added with a smile that this was a subject about which he knew something.

Napoleon's impotence, then, was a topic which intrigued his family, his subjects, his enemies and even his fellow-sovereigns.

It was a matter of concern to others when he was discussing the heir to his Empire, or planning his second marriage; but before his first marriage it was a personal problem which troubled only himself.

Many historians have described Napoleon's frantic search for a wife in 1795 and 1796. The end result of that search, his marriage to Josephine, belongs to my next chapter, but, because I think that his search was complicated by his fear of impotence, and that it illustrates to some extent his curious attitude to women in general, I shall at this point take a look at young General Buonoparte in the Autumn of 1795 – twenty-six years old, already a General of Artillery, already displaying a ruthless streak allied to intense ambition, but without sexual experience, if we accept the opinion of Frédéric Masson. Rather short and thin, with straggly ill-kept hair, he was shy, diffident and awkward with women. Too poor to dress well, his boots were so much too big for him that one young girl nicknamed him 'Puss in Boots'. He had just broken off a promising love affair with his sister-in-law, the attractive Désirée Clary, leaving her broken-hearted without any sort of excuse.

When the Buonapartes took refuge in Marseilles in 1793 after leaving Corsica in a hurry because of their quarrel with Paoli, they made the acquaintance of the family of François Clary, a rich textile merchant; and in September 1794 Joseph Buonaparte married the elder daughter Julie. Encouraged by his brother's example and helped by his services as an intermediary Napoleon began to consider very seriously the advantages of marrying the younger sister, Eugénie Désirée. No doubt the prospect of another rich dowry from the Clary family was not absent from his thoughts. If a formal engagement took place it was probably in April 1795, when he was for a time in Marseilles, but by May he was in Paris, whence he wrote to Désirée, but more often to Joseph, to whom he revealed his 'burning desire' to set up a home, and added that if nothing could be arranged with Eugénie the whole thing must be broken off. This finally enabled him to justify his conduct, at least in his own eyes – it was all her fault for not writing often enough – Joseph had muddled it all. In St Helena he claimed that she had been in love with him, had hidden under his bed, and that he had 'taken her maidenhead'. But according to General Bertrand, who knew him well for many years, he only began to tell this most ungallant story towards the end of his life, when the habit of boasting coarsely about his successes with women was becoming pronounced. Such boasting is more often associated with those who feel insecure about their virility than with those whose prowess in that sphere needs no advertisement.

Napoleon's subsequent conduct makes it seem far more likely

that the physical handicap of substandard masculinity and his fear of impotence made him doubt his ability to satisfy a loving and lovable young bride like Désirée, and drove him to seek not only material advantages but sexual encouragement and help from the all-too-experienced Josephine. I have said that he left Désirée without any excuse, but his real feelings were probably revealed in an unusually subtle manner, in a short novel which he wrote and dedicated to her, during his courtship. It was called *Clisson et Eugénie*, and the hero, Clisson, spent his time studying for the military profession, instead of pursuing girls like other young men of his age. Eugénie was Désirée's first name, and she usually referred to herself in her letters to Napoleon as 'your Eugénie'. Remembering Napoleon's life-long urge for self-revelation can we doubt that this was a roundabout way of explaining his feelings for her?[2] As we shall see, when further discussing this love-affair in Chapter 6, he never forgot her, or his own cruel treatment of his 'first love'.

When Buonoparte, the real-life Clisson, did after all find a wife he left her in pursuit of his military career after a honeymoon of less than forty-eight hours, and made love to her daily and passionately, but by letters.

In May 1795, after leaving Marseilles and Désirée, who still loved him and hoped that he would marry her, he had a brief dalliance on the way to Paris with the twenty-four year old Victorine de Chastenay – just the right age for him; but she could only get him going by talking about Corsica. Thenceforward his attention was entirely centred upon women much older than himself, who he may have thought were less likely to laugh at 'Puss in Boots'.

Two of these, to whom he actually proposed marriage, told him themselves that they were old enough to be his mother. They were Mademoiselle de Montansier aged sixty, and Madame Permon, a forty-year old friend of his mother. To Madame Permon he proposed that his sister Pauline should marry her son, and he himself should marry her. He was deeply hurt when she laughed heartily, and she then became quite worried to find that the ridiculous proposal had been intended seriously. Other women who received proposals of marriage were Madame de la Bouchardie, Madame de Lespada, and very probably Grace Dalrymple, later Lady Elliott.

This charming and adventurous young Scotswoman, only four years older than Napoleon, was a woman of considerable beauty

and strength of character, and might have made an excellent empress. It would have created an intriguing situation as she already had an illegitimate daughter by the Prince of Wales. She had been in prison during the Terror with Josephine and her husband Alexandre de Beauharnais, and in her memoirs she wrote about an affair which Beauharnais had openly conducted with the pretty little Madame de Custine after her husband's execution.

The only woman younger than himself with whose name Bonaparte's was linked during these months in Paris was Thérése Tallien, a fascinating and very loose-living former aristocrat, four years younger than Napoleon. She was the wife of an important and influential man in the Directory, and, as it is evident that at this time in his life the furtherance of his career meant more to Napoleon than anything else, it seems unlikely that he had any serious intentions towards Madame Tallien. Barras had impressed upon him the advisability of marriage, because as a married man he would have standing in society and be less likely to be attacked. He pointed out the advantages of Josephine's connections with both the old and new régimes; and stressed that the marriage would make Bonaparte less Corsican and more French.

Confiding in Barras before finally proposing to Josephine, Napoleon said that he was not trying to seduce a virgin as he was the kind of man who preferred to find love ready-made rather than have to make it himself. Josephine had been Barras's mistress, and she also consulted him. He knew that she did not love her strange little suitor, and he was not the only person to whom she admitted this. Barras said that she exclaimed: 'When one has loved a man like you, Barras, can one ever know another attachment?' He crudely reminded her about her affairs with General Hoche and others. Barras's memoirs are the main source of the allegation that Napoleon took his discarded mistress off his hands and was rewarded with command of the Army of Italy as a dowry. Credit for the discovery of young Buonaparte's talents and for his appointment really belongs to Carnot who was Minister for War, and had read the young officer's reports and military plans. But Barras always claimed that he had 'discovered' Buonaparte and engineered his marriage to Josephine. He conceived a life-long jealous hatred of this pair who, he felt, had shouldered him aside as they rose to Imperial power.

Count Paul Barras, this nobleman who voted for the death of the king, was one of the most evil men of the Revolution, and his evidence about Napoleon and Josephine can be accepted only with

caution. Many of Napoleon's frankest avowals of his physical and psychological difficulties were made to strangely chosen confidants, and in 1796 he could not foresee that the influential and friendly Barras would become a bitter enemy and betray his confidence, and Josephine's also. In St Helena he told Las Cases that Barras was immoral, shameless, debauched and homosexual. All this was probably true, but however unsavoury Barras's own character may have been, and however much he may have been influenced by jealousy, the remark about 'ready-made love' which he attributed to Napoleon fits very well into the pattern of the kind of man young General Buonaparte was at that time.

Less than five years later this seeker for 'ready-made love' discussed a curious plan for a 'ready-made son' proposed by Count Roederer. As a Councillor of State concerned with the Imperial succession Roederer was to have a striking interview with the Emperor in November 1804 in which he was treated to some hard home-truths about Napoleon's family; and much the same thing occurred during an intimate conversation with the First Consul on 2nd August, 1800. Roederer suggested that Bonaparte should adopt a boy of about twelve whom he could educate and love. The plan did not appeal to Bonaparte, whose doubts of his own ability to have a son of his own were evident. However he assured Roederer that he did not feel the need or advantage of having a child, and added that he was without family feeling and that his great anxiety at Marengo had been that if he were killed one of his brothers might succeed him.

These remarks do not ring true. There is abundant evidence of Napoleon's intense desire to have a son; and for all the contempt which he sometimes showed for his brothers he could never quite suppress his Corsican clan-spirit. Some of his plans for a successor involved members of his family. Like most of us he sometimes spoke hastily under the influence of a passing mood, and he said himself that those who took no notice of things which he said when in a bad mood served him best.

How much weight, then, dare we give to some of the gushes of self-revealing confidence which enliven the steady stream of his eloquence? That confession to Las Cases, for example, about his feebleness in the game of love – the word he is said to have used is one which sounds more likely to have been used by the scholarly secretary than by the Corsican who never fully mastered the French language.[3] I have already given my reasons for thinking that that remark does ring true; and I cannot believe that the

sycophantic Las Cases would have invented anything which could dent the image of his hero.

But to get back to 1796 – historians are agreed that the young general was desperately anxious to get married soon, and preferably to someone who might bring him material advantages to help his career. They have, however, overlooked what I believe to have been a more important consideration – help in adapting himself to the sexual demands of marriage. As is so often the case I have only to wait for the man himself to confirm my theory.

In St Helena, when he was no longer a man of action but of words, many many words, whilst looking back over the story of his life, he frequently discussed his wives with Bertrand, Gourgaud and Las Cases. He confessed that he had only married Josephine because he believed her to possess a considerable fortune; but he added a highly significant comment – that he had wanted to make himself appear more mature, and that Josephine had been the first woman to give him reassurance. In most respects Napoleon had been quite exceptionally mature from at least the age of fifteen, but not in the difficult sphere of sexual maturity.

If this remarkably self-confident aggressive young man of twenty-six felt the need for 'ready-made love', and 'reassurance' in pursuit of sexual maturity, that is no more than our medical examination has led us to expect. Of all the symptoms associated by Adler with Organ Inferiority due to defects in the genito-urinary system the one which most affected Napoleon's life was pschyogenic impotence.

The form of emotional immaturity which various indications have already alerted us to suspect is a tendency to homosexuality, and in due course we shall see that this tendency was not always completely repressed. Even if in his early twenties Napoleon's homosexuality was latent, repressed, unconfessed, it could have made a powerful contribution to his fears of impotence.

When he said: 'I have never loved, really loved, except Josephine – a little', he may well have meant that he had never loved as he desired to love; and Josephine's comments which I have quoted point to what he may have meant by 'a little'.

CHAPTER VI

SWEETHEARTS AND WIVES

'Sweethearts and Wives – and may they never meet,' runs the nautical toast. In this chapter I am thinking of the women Napoleon married, those he might have married, and some to whom the term 'mistress' could not be applied. Sad though it may be to use that term to describe Marie Walewska, one of the nicest girls in the story, the facts of the case unavoidably consign her to the chapter on mistresses.

Let us begin near the end of Napoleon's life, when the sordid St Helena scene is brightened by a friendship between the corpulent captive and a girl of fifteen, Betsy Balcombe, who contributed to the idyll by writing a book when she had grown up and become Mrs Abell. Just how idyllic it really was must be a matter of opinion.

Whilst Longwood House was being prepared for Napoleon's occupation he lived in the Pavilion at Betsy's home, The Briars, in which Wellington had made a brief stay only ten years before whilst on his way home from India.

Napoleon clearly enjoyed this proximity to the home of a happy family. He had shaken off much of the physical and nervous exhaustion of the months before and after his defeat. He had indeed begun to do so under the relaxing influence of life on board ship, amongst British sailors, for whom he had a genuine admiration, and who, especially in *Bellerophon*, treated their prisoner with such unexpected kindly sensitivity. But he could hardly have fallen in love with this pert, vivacious and completely natural child. He seems to have been fascinated by her naturalness and refusal to be overawed by the great 'Boney'. How could this comfortable, paunchy, elderly gentleman in a Panama hat be the Corsican ogre so dreaded by the grown-ups? She was easy prey for the smile which had captivated so many victims. Napoleon himself had never been in greater need of sympathy and affection, and he was ready to accept it from this child. After all, who else was there?

I cannot regard Betsy's friendship with 'Boney', and the teasing which he seemed to enjoy, as flirtatious, though some have thought it so; nor need we suspect that weakness for little girls which may trouble hitherto normal men in later life. Napoleon watched Betsy grow from a high-spirited schoolgirl into a sensible sympathetic young woman, and it was on the whole an idyllic friendship. An occasional bout of mischievousness on Betsy's part brought out Napoleon's malicious streak; and a touch of jealousy was perceptible when she flirted with other men. But his love of children, and a strong feeling for a happy family circle, are seen in a kindlier light at The Briars than at any other time in his life. Sad to say he had to mar the idyll for a time. The teasing of an adult by a child is one thing, but a really kind-hearted adult will not allow his side of the teasing to become cruel, as did Napoleon when he hid Betsy's first party dress, and allowed his small friend to cry herself to sleep.

Napoleon, speaking of his flirtation with Caroline Colombier when he was seventeen years old, asked: 'Will it be believed? Our sole delight on that occasion was in nibbling cherries together.' Yes, indeed it will be believed by anyone who accepts my analysis of his character. At this period of his life he was writing of love as a sinister passion, harmful to society and to private happiness; so we need not be at all surprised that he was not prepared to go any further with Caroline Colombier than nibbling cherries, and that certain other little flirtations, which have been hinted at, with Madame Naudin, Marie Merceret, Manesca Pillet, and various unnamed girls, all came to nothing.

In St Helena Napoleon himself told General Gourgaud that as a young officer he had no time for chasing girls, as he had 'too many fish to fry'. Both Frédéric Masson and Gertrude Aretz rather cynically conclude that he had nothing much to do with girls at this time because he was too poor.

Napoleon's poverty, allied to his ambitiousness, has led many writers to believe that his conduct in Paris during those months before he married Josephine – conduct which he himself said was really a search for ready-made love and reassurance – was nothing but a frantic hunt for a rich wife. The same motive has been thought to account for his proposal of marriage to the girl whom he used to say had been his 'first love' – Désirée Clary, the sister of his brother Joseph's wife. After all there was just enough Clary money for two penniless Buonapartes to share, and the marriage would have been a most suitable one. Napoleon's mother strongly

favoured Désirée as a daughter-in-law. Désirée's father said that one Buonaparte in the family was enough, but after his death the Clary family were favourably disposed towards the engagement.

Many different views have been expressed about this friendship or love affair, whichever it was, and about the personality of Désirée, from whose marriage with Marshal Bernadotte the Swedish royal family are descended. I have mentioned in the previous chapter the coarse and unchivalrous way in which Napoleon spoke of this 'first love', when in St Helena he had degenerated into a crashing bore, convinced that himself and his alleged love affairs were the only topics of interest to anyone. He claimed that it was because he had seduced her that he had made her husband a marshal, a prince and a king. It is true that Napoleon helped and favoured Bernadotte because of his affection for Désirée; but it was the Swedes, not Napoleon, who made him a prince and a king, and Napoleon probably made this remark partly in order to hurt Bernadotte, for whom he had long felt a jealous hatred.

Although Désirée, even after her marriage to Bernadotte, would never come to Court because of her understandable dislike of Josephine, Napoleon used to shower gifts upon her. Masson believed that he never ceased to be 'activated by the desire to atone for the sorrow and mortification he had caused her'. Some Bonapartists have chosen to depict her as a rather heartless woman, unmoved by her former lover's misfortunes, though she had been willing to accept his patronage. After Bernadotte had become Crown Prince of Sweden, and even after he was King, she often stayed in Paris, and she was there even when Bernadotte had assumed command of the allied forces opposed to Napoleon. She has been accused of being in league with Fouché and Talleyrand against Napoleon, and it was said that she was able to act as an agent for Napoleon's enemies because of his old love for her. He certainly used a gentle diplomacy very unlike his usual methods in dealing with enemies, when he suggested that the continued presence in Paris of the wife of a declared enemy was inappropriate.

Désirée was never truly happy in her husband's adopted country, and it may be true that her frequent visits to Paris were prompted by a love of the city and its shops. She has never been accused of actually trying to cadge favours from Napoleon, though she did retain possession of a mansion which he had bought for Bernadotte. Although its demolition was essential to the con-

struction of the present Boulevard Haussmann Napoleon III was tactful enough to postpone this until after her death.

In assessing the character of Désirée, after she was jilted by Napoleon, I think her reputation can stand or fall on what one thinks of her letter to Napoleon when she heard of his marriage. I cannot believe that this letter from a girl of eighteen was anything but genuine:

> You have made me so unhappy, and I am weak enough to forgive you! You married! Poor Désirée must no longer love you or think of you? . . . My one consolation is that you will know how steadfast I am . . . I have nothing more to hope for but death. Life is a torment to me, since I may no longer dedicate it to you . . . You, married! I cannot grasp the thought – it kills me. Never shall I belong to another . . . And I had so hoped soon to be the happiest of women, your wife! Your marriage has shattered my happiness . . . All the same I wish you the greatest joy and blessing in your marriage. May the woman you have chosen make you as happy as I had intended to make you, and as happy as you deserve to be. In the midst of your present happiness do not quite forget poor Eugénie, and be sorry for her fate.*

This is believed to have shaken Napoleon. I do not believe that he left her in the lurch because he hoped to find a richer wife. That would have been unpardonable. I think that he deserves our sympathy, for he was probably throwing away his last chance of marrying a woman who would have loved him for ever. When he met Marie Walewska it was too late. He never forgot his 'first love'. The mare which he rode in the advance to Quatre Bras was called Désirée, and she brought him no better luck than he deserved.

It would be stretching a point to use the term 'sweetheart' for any of the women to whom Napoleon proposed marriage after leaving Désirée, and before marrying Josephine. Even with the only young one among them, the attractive Grace Dalrymple, his relationship seems to be have been mostly on an intellectual plane; and they had many interesting conversations. One day in the garden of the Tuileries, when some children had been identified to Napoleon as English, he exclaimed with bitterness: 'English! I wish

* As quoted by *Napoleon and his Women Friends* by Gertrude Aretz, translated by E. & C. Paul, George Allen & Unwin, London 1927.

the earth would open and swallow them up.' When she said that to speak thus in her presence was not very gallant, he replied that she was Scottish and he did not consider her to be English. She rejoined: 'I am prouder of being an Englishwoman than of anything.' Scottish Nationalists would presumably deplore her answer, but perhaps they can take heart from knowing that he at least recognised the difference; and may have preferred the Scots to the 'complacent' English.

Sexually immature young men who, like the young Buonaparte, feel the need for reassurance, may seek experience with prostitutes. This course cannot be recommended if undertaken in an experimental spirit, for any failure in such sex without love could have discouraging effects on the seeker's morale. The hazards of marriage to a prostitute are such that one can feel considerable respect for Josephine that her marriage to Napoleon was as successful as it was. 'Prostitute' may seem a harsh word to apply to the charming, elegant, good-natured and warm-hearted Josephine; but when it was used by General Hoche he knew what he was talking about. He had had an affair with Josephine when they were both in the Carmes prison during the Terror. When she tried to revive it when they were both free he broke it off with these words: 'Such an amour can be pardoned in a prison but hardly outside . . . One may take a prostitute for a mistress but hardly for a wife.'

It is hard to blame Josephine for seeking consolation and protection in that grim prison in daily expectation of a cruel death. Her husband, before his execution had formed a most amorous friendship with a fellow prisoner, Madame de Custine; and after Beauharnais was executed Josephine did not long remain inconsolable. Lazare Hoche, tall, gallant, ruggedly handsome, and a military hero of the Republic even if in temporary eclipse, was a comforter whom few women in her terrible situation could have resisted. But Hoche's cruel epithet was justified by her conduct when she was hunting for a protector in Paris.

Long ago her husband, Alexandre de Beauharnais, had repudiated the paternity of her daughter Hortense, in a letter brimming over with abuse of this wife, whom he called the vilest of creatures. This violent estrangement followed a visit which he paid to her native island of Martinique, where he heard a lot of malicious gossip about her conduct there. Much confusing doubt and rumour surround Josephine's early life in Martinique. She had

what may have been quite a serious childhood romance with a boy, usually referred to simply as 'William of Martinique', the descendant of a Scottish Jacobite emigrant. Her aunt, who was living openly with the Marquis de Beauharnais, broke up this love affair because she was determined that her niece should marry Alexandre de Beauharnais, to whom a younger sister, who had died, had been engaged.

Josephine aged sixteen duly married Alexandre who was nineteen years old, but the marriage did not go smoothly. It ended in a legal separation after little more than five years; but some three years before that Alexandre had deserted his wife, and they never again lived together. Before the legal separation Alexandre abducted his three year old son, but had to give him up. He had been engaged in an affair of his own with an old flame, Madame de Longpré, and, as she accompanied him to Martinique, it may have been she who fed her lover with malicious gossip about his wife.

Possibly Josephine's love for William of Martinique did not end with her marriage. She returned to Martinique taking her daughter. Hortense in 1788, in circumstances which are clouded in doubt. It has been alleged that she was pregnant at the time, and not by her husband. A possible abortion on board ship has been suggested as the cause of her subsequent childlessness. She stayed in Martinique for nearly three years, which rather understandably strengthened her husband's suspicions that she was still in love with William. But Beauharnais did eventually apologise for his cruel accusations, and try to patch up their marriage. He certainly did assume parental responsibility for Hortense.

Whatever may have been the truth about her life in Martinique and her husband's jealous suspicions, much of the evidence about her immoral conduct has been accepted by historians; and not only by hostile ones, such as Joseph Turquan, but by the eminently fair-mineded, ardently Bonapartist, Frédéric Masson. It seems certain that she threw respectability to the winds in the feverish atmosphere of post-Revolutionary Paris, and went to bed impartially with important men in the régime, such as Barras and Hoche, and with lesser beings – an aide-de-camp, and Hoche's Alsatian groom Van Acker. Count Horace de Viel Castel claimed that his father, who was Josephine's chamberlain, had been her lover before she married Napoleon.

Josephine did not possess the considerable fortune for which Buonaparte hoped, but she did not lack experience. She thought

that he had money, and her letters make it plain that she thought he would be a useful protector. She made some sort of advances to him. There is that romantic story of her sending her boy Eugène to see the general and ask for the return of his dead father's sword. If this really occurred it was a shrewd move, for Napoleon was fond of children, and is said to have been greatly moved by the forthright fearless lad, who was to become his loyal and affectionate stepson. But for the most part, once his mind was made up, it was the general who made the running. He besieged the bewildered society butterfly, leaning across other guests at table to engage her in ardent conversation, or rather to submerge her in torrents of Corsican eloquence.

The best she could produce in return was somewhat apprehensive amusement. *'Il est drôle Buonaparte,'* was her almost unvarying comment; and she certainly did not love her strange suitor, and even admitted to feeling 'disagreeably indifferent to him'. When Grace Dalrymple asked her how she could have accepted him she admitted that she had no affection for him, but hoped he might be of service to her children. Josephine was some seven years older than Napoleon, but he added two years to his twenty-six, and she took off five, so that both could declare the same age, twenty-eight. It was a civil marriage, a fact of which Josephine took advantage some eight years later, when she was striving to keep her husband. Knowing that the Pope would not attend the coronation unless her position was regularised, she revealed the facts to him, and Napoleon had to submit to a private religious wedding, performed by his step-uncle, who had by then become Cardinal Fesch.

Before her marriage to Napoleon Josephine, who was christened Marie-Josephe Rose de Tascher de la Pagerie, had always been known as Rose, or by her family nickname of 'Yeyette'. When he married her Napoleon decided that she would in future be known as Josephine. Perhaps he wanted to set the seal of his possession upon her, and to make it clear that she was now entering upon a new life.

It may have been his strong family feeling which led him to choose that part of her name which was a feminine form of the name of his elder brother Joseph. It would not have been out of character if he had been thinking so far ahead as to realise how impossible would be *L'Impératrice Rose*, or even worse *La Reine Rose.*

Napoleon overheard Josephine's notary, Monsieur Raguideau,

The Empress Josephine
From an engraving by Hopwood

The Empress Marie Louise
From an engraving by Bosselman

Betsy Balcombe (Mrs. Abell) as a young woman
From a photograph by G. W. Mellis

Mademoiselle George, 'The Whale'

begging her not to marry him, saying that he had 'nothing but a cloak and a sword'. Impressed by this care for a client's interests Buonaparte shook his hand, and said he hoped he would continue to be in charge of their affairs. At the time of the coronation he could not resist sending for Monsieur Raguideau to ask: 'Well, have I nothing but a cloak and a sword now?'

Two days after the marriage he was off to the wars, and she could hope that she might see no more of him. Immediately his astonishing flood of letters began to arrive, most of them beginning '*Ma bonne amie*', though there is at least one with the odd beginning, '*My peerless little mother*' – '*mon incomparable petite mère,* – and not at a time when she was trying to deceive him into believing that she was pregnant.

A curious unreal quality about them has led writers such as Turquan and Hilaire Belloc to compare them to letters such as lovers write in novels. Mr Belloc must have read an expurgated edition, for the originals are in many cases much too hot for cold print in an English novel of his day. But in the early stages of the marriage Josephine did not return either his affection or his passionate love letters. Frédéric Masson saw these letters as:

> A constant cry from a hungry heart, from a man who had lived chastely, to the mistress older, more worldly, more sophisticated than himself, who satisfied his heart and senses.[2]

But to Josephine – '*la maitresse âgée, mondaine, et experte*' – they were merely strange, odd, droll – like the writer, '*ce drôle de Bonaparte*'. She shared them with Claire de Rémusat, who was struck by their extraordinary quality, and realised that Napoleon's passion made her frivolous friend almost the mainspring of the victorious march of the Revolutionary army.

The French would soon be called Josephine 'Our Lady of Victory', but all she learned from Napoleon was how to write letters to her lover, Hippolyte Charles, with whom she had begun a passionate liaison. It was to him that she was sending 'a thousand kisses as fiery as my heart', when she could muster only tepid, indifferent and infrequent acknowledgments of similar outpourings of her husband's heart. She hoped to leave Napoleon and marry Charles; and, although Napoleon was able to break up the affair, it began again when he was in Egypt.

According to Barras she was delighted when rumours reached

France that Napoleon had been murdered in Egypt. When Barras had sent everyone out of the room she begged to be told if it were true, and when he said that he believed it was she made no attempt to conceal her joy. 'Ah! I breathe freely. Ah! I breathe freely. Ah, my friend, if it be a fact I shall no longer be so wretched. He is a man who has never loved anyone but himself; he is the most engrained and ferocious egotist the Earth has ever seen. He has never known anything but his own interest, his ambition.' She rambled on and, after further reassurance that he was dead, she said: 'Ah! One wicked man the less', and went on blackening her husband's character.

Barras, she said, could not image what he was really like – always thinking of some trick to play upon people; always worrying somebody; and all this mingled with complaints that he kept her so short of money that she had to depend on good friends in *Compagnie Bodin*, to whom she had rendered great service in Italy. Now, this accurate summary of one side of Napoleon's character can no longer be dismissed as another malicious invention by the spiteful Barras, because we know from Josephine's letters to Hippolyte Charles that these were her real feelings at the time. The publication of many of these letters in Louis Hastier's book *La Grande Amour de Josephine* has recently re-focussed attention upon this passionate and dangerous liaison.

If before this there had been any sort of deliberate attempts to gloss over this illicit passion and all that it meant to Josephine, these seem to have begun with Baron Claude de Méneval, who became Napoleon's secretary in 1802 as a young man of twenty four. Loyalty to his employers, and the customary zeal of Bonapartist writers in suppressing the tawdry and disgraceful aspects of the entire clan, may have led to his absurd attempts to whitewash Josephine's character. Those who allude to Josephine's infidelity, he maintained, can only name 'the commonplace, insignificant, and somewhat enigmatic name of a Monsieur Charles'. He added that, 'this curious personality seems to be a legendary rather than a real character'. The name of Hippolyte Charles does not appear in the index to Méneval's memoirs, though we find in them wondering speculation about this nebulous individual: 'Charles Somebody or Somebody Charles, a shadowy figure, an unknown, a phantom, a Monsieur X'.

This was indeed protesting too much, but the campaign to erase Charles from the national memory led to the removal of his dossier from the archives of the War Ministry. However 'Monsieur X'

was a horribly real character to Napoleon, and was one factor in determining his unauthorised desertion of his army in Egypt. After learning from Junot (and he never forgave Junot for telling him) that Josephine's conduct in Paris was becoming a scandal, he wrote the letter (now in the British Museum) to his brother Joseph which gave much comfort to his enemies when it was published abroad after Nelson's fleet captured a consignment of Bonaparte's mail. 'I have great grief in my domestic life,' he wrote. 'The veil has been entirely torn away. You alone remain faithful to me in the world.'

This last sentence was unfair to his devoted stepson and aide-de-camp, Eugène Beauharnais, whose letter to his mother was in the same haul of mail, and could have given the clue to the domestic upheaval, had the English been able to understand it. Describing Napoleon's distress and averring that he still loved her, Eugène warned his mother that Napoleon knew:

> that Charles travelled in your carriage to within three post stations of Paris – that you saw him there – that you went to the Italian Opera with him in a box on the fourth tier – that he gave you your little dog, and is living with you now.

Charles who? The English did not know the answer, but thousands of Frenchmen did. The affair was common gossip in the Army of Italy, and was mentioned in many contemporary memoirs. Laure Junot did not of course overlook a man by whom so many women, including Pauline as well as Josephine Bonaparte, were attracted. She found him charming, droll and amusing: 'An odd fellow – he made one laugh . . . utterly attractive, although a little deficient in the fine polish of elegant society.' Madame Hamelin, who according to Turquan was 'the first woman to walk in the street clad in transparent garments', also fell for him; and her husband described him as 'a small man with a charming face and a knack for puns and jingles at which she [Josephine] laughed until she cried – never forgetting to put her handkerchief to her lips to conceal her dreadful teeth'.

It would seem that Charles was somewhat effeminate, but none the less attractive to women. Frédéric Masson saw Charles as an essential adjunct to Josephine's passion for Paris, its gaiety and its shops, and an antidote to the boredom of which she often complained; but he loyally concealed the disreputable side of the

relationship, to which I must shortly allude.

Arthur Lévy, writing in 1894, described Charles as:

> a man of the kind most dangerous to a woman who is rather bored and does not love her husband. Charles was what is called amusing. He made puns and was somewhat affected. The keen interest that Josephine took in this young hussar was known to everyone in the Army of Italy, and when what Madame de Ségur calls 'Napoleon's jealous displeasure' burst forth, no one was surprised to see Charles, at that time aide-de-camp to General Leclerc, banished from the Army of Italy by order of the Commander-in-Chief.

The rumour at the Headquarters in Milan was that Charles had been arrested and shot on Napoleon's orders. In fact he was sent back to France, and another rumour was that he had spent the New Year with Josephine on his way there. Luckily for him Napoleon did not hear of this, but he might well have had him shot if he had known the full extent of Josephine's involvement with him. He knew that she had been passionately in love with Charles, and even wanted a divorce; but Napoleon still wanted her for his wife, and no one was more adept at turning a blind eye to what he did not want to see. But he would never have turned a blind eye, possibly never have forgiven even Josephine, if he had known that she was not merely head over heels in love but up to the neck with Charles in dishonest trafficking in army contracts.

She used the influence of her name to get Charles employment with the shady mercantile house of Louis Bodin, and, ever in need of money herself, stooped to becoming the pensioner of this firm in return for what she called 'favours'. It was probably Barras who helped her to stifle the probing of the upright General Brune into the dishonesty of Compagnie Bodin. Joseph Turquan refers to Josephine's dealings with another firm of army contractors, Compagnie Flachat, from whom she received five hundred thousand francs. He also alleges that for reporting what went on in the First Consul's household she was paid one thousand francs a day by Fouché, who had spies everywhere.

Napoleon may have flattered himself that marriage to the predestined ruler of France would change Josephine, and for a long time he struggled hard to preserve his ideal. He deceived himself for as long as possible about her reasons for refusing to

join him in Italy where the conqueror had prepared a palace to receive his consort.

But after she resumed her affair with Charles he was determined to divorce her, and when he returned from Egypt there occurred the well-known scene after poor Josephine had gone to meet him on the wrong road, and Napoleon, finding her not at home, believed that at last she had really left him for Charles. The Bonapartes got in first, and inflamed their brother with excited denunciation of the hated unfaithful wife. Josephine found herself locked out of his room and his heart.

She finally melted him with her persistent tears, aided by the pleas of her son and daughter, neither of which he could resist for long. His valet, Constant, found Napoleon and Josephine together in bed next morning.

But from that day the boot was on the other foot, and it was a question of Josephine striving to retain, or rather to rekindle, his affection. She had realised somewhat tardily just how high he was aiming, and when he had finally made her an Empress and she knew that he must have an heir for his new dynasty, the precariousness of her position amongst the scheming Bonapartes kept her in perpetual anxiety, and she saw to it that any little marks of her husband's love did not pass unnoticed. Constant said that she was so delighted when the Emperor had spent a night with her that she told everyone in the Palace about it, 'rubbing her little hands together'. Popular sayings, like nursery rhymes, often have their origin in real events, and it would be an amusing piece of research to discover when the music-hall quip 'Not tonight, Josephine' was first used.

Napoleon repeatedly asserted that it was only his need for an heir which drove him to divorce Josephine; that he would never have left her if she could have given him a child; and that she would have been his choice for a life companion. In the earlier years of their marriage he seriously considered adopting various relatives as his heir, and it is at least possible that if she had tried to understand and help him and to cultivate his love at the start, as she did when she was desperately trying to avert the divorce, he might never have left her to strike out into the perilous sea of a second marriage, which in retrospect he used to claim had led to his ruin. He called it 'an abyss covered with flowers'.

Josephine as the deserted wife has naturally attracted much sympathy, but she had only herself to blame, and, since a deceived husband was regarded as a ridiculous figure in France, it is really

surprising that Napoleon forgave her so often. When he began to pay her back in her own coin she spied upon him, paid others to do so too, and wearied him with emotional scenes. The forebearance which he showed her, and his protracted hesitation and mental agony before he could bring himself to decide on a divorce, indicate the extent of his dependence on the reassurance which he said she gave him; and of course as their marriage wore on he came to depend upon her for much more than mere reassurance in bed.

She was, as he often said, 'all woman'. She was completely uninterested in politics or affairs of State, and if he spoke of such things to her she would pout and say: 'You no longer love me.'

Her trivial mind and frivolous feminine personality made her an ideal companion for his few hours of relaxation – the only confidante with whom he could be himself. She understood the rather unexpectedly playful side of his nature. Even more than games of cards, at which he cheated consistently, he loved such childish games as blindman's buff and prisoner's base.

Historians have been intrigued by the question of how much these two finally came to care for one another – how completely they forgot the hatred which each had felt for the other at certain times of their life together. When Josephine's doctor, Horeau, told Napoleon that Josephine's death had been hastened by her grief at his misfortunes, Napoleon said: 'Dear woman; dear kind Josephine! She loved me indeed.' Dr Horeau said that she had wanted to comfort Napoleon and share his captivity, and had said that if she had still been Empress she would have driven through occupied France to be with him at Fontainebleau, and would never have left him – 'and I believe she would have done it', was Napoleon's comment.

Perhaps his true feelings were reflected in what he said to Bertrand, shortly before his death: 'I truly loved her, although I didn't respect her. She was a liar, and an utter spendthrift, but she had a certain something which was irresistible. She was a woman to her very finger tips.'

Her infidelities forgotten, she had become the lasting love of his life, just as by her grace and kind-hearted generosity she had earned the affectionate admiration of millions of Frenchmen, to whom she became a symbol of her husband's triumphs – Our Lady of Victory – but much more. With all her failings she has secured for herself a place in history as a curiously compelling, warm and human personality.

At the time of Napoleon's first abdication it was to the

discarded Empress that the victorious sovereigns, especially the susceptible young Tsar Alexander I, went to pay court. Was this just sympathy for a woman whom the great enemy had treated badly? I hardly think so; and it could not have been that which made the Crown Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin want to marry her. Her children and grand-children adored her, and so did every courtier and servant who had anything to do with her. The cynical Talleyrand said, at the time of the divorce, that everyone in the Palace would regret her departure, because she knew about everyone, and helped and cared for them all. Also she knew best how to calm the Emperor.

Her notorious and almost unbelievable extravagance, which helped to embitter her mother-in-law against her, was almost as much for others as for herself. She simply could not stop giving things away, and her unselfishness was clearly shown when she gave costly presents to her grand-children, saying that they had been sent by their mother. Her generosity helped to offset a surprising lack of it in her husband. Napoleon was not by nature a mean man, but Constant said that he never gave presents to the Palace staff, not even at Christmas. He also kept a shrewd eye on their 'pickings'. Perhaps he thought that the privilege of serving him should be enough. Mademoiselle Avrillon, Josephine's lady's maid, confirmed Constant's evidence, but said that it was often Duroc's part, as Grand Marshal of the Palace, to make up for Napoleon's lack of generosity to the staff.

It must have been almost impossible to dislike Josephine. Even her bitter estranged first husband tried to effect a reconciliation. She had no enemies except Barras, the Bonapartes, and presumably some of her creditors, for she died owing over two million francs.

I know of no portrait or bust of Josephine which helps to reveal the secret of her charm – none which suggests that she was beautiful, or even what is conveyed to me by the French expression *belle laide*. She had such bad teeth that she was always careful not to show them when smiling. Her secret lay in her exceptionally warm, tender-hearted, and generous nature.

So far as Napoleon was concerned, Josephine, despite her cruel quips about him, had given him the help and reassurance which he had said he needed. As a result of her reassurance, and perhaps of the philandering to which she drove him, he had become a very different suitor and bridegroom; and it must be admitted that he

did not approach his second marriage like a man plagued by fears of impotence. This time he was to be not the pupil but the teacher; and time was to show that the lessons were only too well learned by Marie Louise. This time there were no proposals to women more than twice his age; no search for 'ready-made love'. He went about the business like a farmer bargaining for a good breeding heifer, and his conduct reflected the coarsening influence of his adulterous liaisons. He was giving up his chosen partner and all he wanted was a womb, he said. Caulaincourt, his ambassador in Russia, took his tone from this coarse pronouncement. Perhaps he knew that Napoleon had said long ago that women should be treated as mere machines to make children.

Reporting about Napoleon's first choice, the young Russian Grand-Duchess whose mother was determined that she should not be the chosen victim, he said that although only sixteen she already showed every sign of taking after her mother who at fifty was still recognisably a *moule à enfants*. Napoleon's second choice was the nineteen-year-old daughter of Emperor Francis of Austria, the Archduchess Marie Louise. Having studied her pedigree, and noted how many of her ancestors had had very large families, he said: 'That's the kind of womb I want to marry.'

Lord Castlereagh's allusion to Marie Louise's betrothal to Napoleon as the sacrifice of a virgin to the Minotaur, accurately expressed her own feelings. She had been taught to hate and fear Napoleon – Anti-Christ, the arch-enemy of her father the Emperor of Austria and of his country. When she heard of Josephine's divorce she wrote to a friend that she dreaded lest the choice of a successor might fall on her, but could not believe that her father could possibly demand such a sacrifice. Yet when he did she dutifully obeyed him, as daughters did in those days, even if their fathers were not emperors. She had been brought up in an incredibly 'sheltered' environment, into which no evidence of maleness was allowed to intrude. Even dogs and cats with which she might come into contact had to be females. Some eleventh-hour instruction could hardly have prepared her for her bride-groom's conduct, which a British cabinet minister, Lord Liverpool, described as more a rape than a wooing.

The story is well known. As the bride approached her new kingdom, Napoleon, intending to surprise her by pretending to be an orderly or groom, rose through heavy rain well ahead of the official welcoming party. Of course she soon realised that the dripping wet figure jumping into her coach was her bridegroom;

someone had shouted 'The Emperor'. Travelling with her in the coach was his sister, Queen Caroline of Naples, for whom she had conceived an instant dislike. But Napoleon, delighted to find that he had made a favourable impression upon his bride, decided to anticipate their civil and religious marriage ceremonies. His complaisant uncle, Cardinal Fesch, had assured him that the proxy marriage could be regarded as valid, so he by-passed Soissons, where they should have spent the night, drove on to Compiègne, where he swept all receptions aside, and after an improvised supper for three, Marie Louise, Caroline and himself, he asked his bride what her father had told her.

'He told me that I now belonged entirely to you, and was to do everything you wanted,' was her reply, and it was enough for Napoleon.

Unpleasant allegations that the excessive ardour of his love--making caused her lasting physical and mental injury simply cannot be credited. Napoleon, who may be presumed to know best, said that she had laughed happily, and next day he was jubilant, urging everyone in sight to marry an Austrian girl. Marie Louise confessed that she had found him captivating and impossible to resist; and she wrote to tell her father how happy she was in her marriage.

Later Napoleon had no fears about encouraging the Austrian Foreign Minister, Metternich, to see her alone in order to be able to assure her father that she really meant it. It certainly seems that Napoleon's unorthodox methods did help to launch successfully the political marriage of this ill-assorted couple, into which Marie Louise entered with apprehension, and Napoleon in the cynical spirit indicated by the crude remarks which I have quoted. There were always two sides to Napoleon, and the good side entitles him to by far the greatest share of the credit for the early success of his second marriage. He organised everything with exquisite delicacy of feeling. With almost feminine intuition he had her apartments decorated and made to resemble as nearly as possible her own rooms in the Schönbrunn Palace, even to the extent of putting on a table the piece of tapestry on which she had been working before leaving home.

He was rewarded for all his good taste and kindness by the way in which his bride's rather colourless personality was enriched by being the centre of so much solicitude and attention, to which she had not been accustomed during her somewhat dreary existence and severe upbringing at the Austrian Court. She revelled in having

apparently unlimited money to spend, and during her first visit to Austria after her marriage she infuriated her step-mother by ostentatious display of her jewellery and new-found wealth and importance. It was not too hard for this strictly educated child, whose jewellery had consisted of some coral necklaces, seed-pearls, hair bracelets and green beads, to grow fond of the generous provider of so much luxury, especially as he made a point of living for her alone.

Quite soon she realised that, far from being the monster she had dreaded, her amiable, plump, middle-aged husband only wanted to please her, and was in fact just a little in awe of her. She told Metternich that she was not afraid of the Emperor, but was beginning to think that he was a little afraid of her. Napoleon himself, for the first time in his life, was forgetting his rule about never allowing a woman to influence his actions. He was badly needed in Spain, where Wellington's brilliant strategy was beginning to show that defeat of the much stronger French forces was a possibility.

Napoleon later excused his inaction by saying:

> I had just married a young, pretty and agreeable wife; was I not to show a sign of pleasure? Was I not to devote a single moment to her without being hauled over the coals? Was I not to be allowed a few short hours of happiness like other men?

It is pleasing to think that he did have his hours of happiness before disillusionment set in.

In his marriage to Marie Louise Napoleon displayed his great capacity for romantic fantasy. He idealised her not only as the mother of his long-awaited heir, but because of her 'blue blood' and Imperial ancestry. She was his passport into that inner circle of crowned heads into which he so ardently longed to be admitted. His letters to her are dull and commonplace compared to his passionate outpourings to Josephine; and he frequently reverted to the theme of the influence which he expected her to use with her father in her husband's cause. He tended to be always on his best behaviour with her, although, as I have mentioned, she discerned the sadistic side of his nature. On one occasion, when he lost his temper and showed the 'hairy heel', he quickly excused himself, saying: 'It is the way I am.'

When entrusting the Regency to her at a time of crisis in 1814,

he said: 'She herself has more intelligence than all the counsellors.' He was an exceptionally good judge in such affairs, with a genius for choosing the right men to work for him, and seldom influenced by sentiment, so it is surprising that even after four years of marriage he could be so blinded by his feelings of respectful affection. Of course she did not live up to his high opinion of her. Her private diaries show considerably more wit and spirit than she is usually credited with, but the views of those who have considered her to have been stupid, vain, and shallow are only too soundly based on accounts of her behaviour during her brief Regency. When two Court officials came to her bedroom to announce the fall of the Empire, and the Emperor's attempted suicide, she noticed that one of them kept his eyes discreetly lowered. 'You are looking at my foot,' she said. 'Don't you think it is a pretty one?'

Some controversy has centred upon the strange character of Marie Louise. Because Napoleon eventually came to believe that his marriage to her had contributed to his downfall many Bonapartist writers have painted her in unrelieved black, blaming her for deserting Napoleon, refusing to join him in Elba, or in France during the Hundred Days, and for living in sin with her lover Count Neipperg. Later she would refuse to visit her son until he lay on his deathbed. Accordingly she has been called 'neither wife nor mother'. Her defenders, however, have claimed that it was her father who separated her from her husband, even encouraging her association with Neipperg to that end. This was Napoleon's opinion, but it is not supported by very satisfactory evidence.

Some of Marie Louise's letters certainly show that she tried to return to Napoleon, but others show clearly that she rejoiced at the news of Waterloo, which ended all hopes of a reunion. Most damning of the evidence against her is a letter in which she wrote to her paramour Neipperg in 1814, when Napoleon's empire was disintegrating: 'Let us be patient. All this is coming to grief and cannot last much longer.' When she heard that Napoleon was dead, and she was free to marry the man with whom she had for so long been 'living in sin', she wrote:

> Although I never entertained any strong sentiment of any kind for him I cannot forget that he is the father of my son, and far from treating me badly, as most people believe, he always manifested the deepest regard for me – the only thing

one can expect in a political marriage. So I am very affected. Although I ought to be pleased that he has ended his miserable existence, I could have wished for him many years of happiness and life, as long as it would have been far from me.

In this chapter I am concerned with the effect of his two marriages upon Napoleon; and will defer to Chapter 10 consideration of how being married to him might have affected Marie Louise.

Napoleon's gift for self-deception, and for seeing things only as he wished them to be, enabled him to appear to preserve his illusions about Marie Louise; and he continued to the end to speak of her as 'virtue personified', a loyal and dutiful wife prevented from coming to live with him only by the evil machinations of his enemies. But of course he knew all about her notorious illicit liaison with Neipperg, and her illegitimate children, and just once the bland mask dropped to give a glimpse of the true bitterness of his feelings.

Whilst writing his will he was heard to cry out in anguish: 'To be a Corsican, and to forgive such an outrage!' But he added: 'She is the mother of my son and she alone will be there to watch over him.' Apart from that unguarded moment, and his definition of his second marriage as 'an abyss covered with flowers', he was able to make his marriages sound almost ordinary relationships.

Chatting in St Helena to Las Cases about his two wives he said that both had been amiable, gentle, and strongly attached to him. Josephine, all arts and graces, knew how to employ every artifice to heighten her natural attractions. She never asked him for anything but was in debt to everyone. Marie Louise, all innocence and simplicity of nature, was frank, open and a stranger to subterfuge. She freely asked for what she wanted, and never thought of receiving anything without immediately paying for it. He certainly knew a great deal more about both of them than he chose to disclose during that evening stroll in St Helena.

Napoleon was certainly not very lucky with either of his two wives, but to be fair to them it cannot have been all plain sailing to be married to a man with his extraordinarily complex character, to say nothing of the physical abnormality which I have described, and the resultant psycho-sexual adaptation, in which a certain element of homosexuality played a part. If his admission that he had 'never loved, really loved' any woman, implied that he had

never attained complete sexual satisfaction, which is a reasonable assumption in the light of other evidence, then this gives us some insight into the frustrations which may have affected his wives, and led them to seek satisfaction elsewhere. Without excusing their notorious infidelities we may at least to some extent condone them, when we remember the prevailing immorality in France in their day. Josephine revenged herself for any frustrations or affronts which she suffered at Napoleon's hands by perpetrating that cruel quip which touched him on a tender spot: '*Bon-a-parte est bon-à-rien*.' She went further, and during the time of her efforts to avert divorce, when she wanted to make it clear that she was not responsible for the infertility of the marriage, she seems to have been ready to discuss her sexual relations with Napoleon with a variety of people, and with singularly little reserve.

In his youth Napoleon, that specialist in contrasting moods, had written a long essay, the *Discours de Lyons*, in which in contrast to the cruel things which he had written about women and love, and the rudeness of his treatment of many women, he spoke of man's need for woman, the companion especially created for him, to be a complement to his nature and to fortify him against unbridled lusts. For a time he undoubtedly thought that Marie Louise would satisfy this deep need, but she was to desert him all too soon. She wrote to him many more loving letters than Josephine had bothered to write, but the letters which she wrote to her lover, and what she wrote about Napoleon after his death, proved that her loving letters were deceitful.

Napoleon could never bring himself openly to admit that he knew about Marie Louise's unfaithfulness, but it was impossible to overlook Josephine's notorious misconduct, and this helped to justify his own restless search for true satisfaction with other women. That search is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

MISTRESSES

Josephine's unfaithfulness drove Napoleon into the arms of a succession of mistresses, some of whom held the centre of the stage for a long time, others played small parts, and still others flit across the scene, omitted from some biographies, alluded to in others by name or by initials, like 'Mr X' in newspaper reports of blackmail cases. Napoleon himself put the total at seven, and the much higher estimates given by some writers, such as Masson, Turquan and Aretz, may be accounted for by the temptation to boast about any hint of friendship with the great man. Guy Breton mentions many mistresses not noticed by other writers, providing Napoleon with so many affairs to satisfy the inordinate lust with which he credits him that one is left wondering how he found time for his other achievements. Although this book may not be in the scholarly tradition of Masson, Aretz and Delderfield, much of its entertaining gossip is well authenticated by references to contemporary letters and memoirs.

In St Helena, after reading a pamphlet about his love affairs, Napoleon vowed that he knew virtually nothing of several women said to have been his mistresses. He added: 'They make me out to be a Hercules.' And this was at a time when he had succumbed to the habit of boasting about his conquests.

None of Napoleon's mistresses strike the imagination as being in the tradition of the great courtesans. This may be because he was always determined not to allow them any political influence. On the other hand it may be because there was something immature or half-hearted about his amours; almost as if he felt that an Emperor ought to have mistresses – part of the act, as it were – but he hardly knew what to do with them. Grassini, who complained that 'Napoleon's caresses were on the furtive side, and often left the ladies unsatisfied', was not the only one of his mistresses to experience frustrations of this sort.

When he was eighteen he had an encounter with a prostitute, whom he treated as a case for social study, questioning her in great

detail about her way of life, and later writing a long and rather dull account of the conversation, explaining that he had had to lead her on by feigning amorous intentions which he intended later to prove that he lacked. But apart from this and the mild flirtations to which I have referred in Chapter 6, the only affair before his marriage which deserves attention was with Madame Turreau de Lignières, the charming and vivacious wife of one of the Representatives of the People with the Army of Italy, in which General Buonaparte in 1794 was commanding the Artillery.

Louise Turreau set her cap at any available officer, and the weight of evidence suggests that her acquaintance with General Buonaparte did not reach the stage of what is sometimes archly referred to in legal proceedings as 'intimacy'. It did, however, leave a wound in Napoleon's mind. In order to amuse Louise during a visit to the forward positions he ordered a minor sortie, an affair of outposts, which was unnecessary and had no real military objective, but which resulted in some loss of life for which he very properly blamed himself to the end of his days. He frankly admitted that he had been trying to impress Louise, and it seems likely that his underlying motive was to assert the masculinity of which he had deep-seated doubts.

He met her again in 1795, when it was rumoured that he was the father of her child; but it has been more generally believed that she was just one of several important men's wives whose favours he courted in order to help his career.

In his first affair after marrying Josephine he used his position as a general in a much more reprehensible manner, reminiscent of King David's deplorable treatment of Uriah the Hittite. Napoleon's Bath-Sheba, nicknamed Bellilote was Pauline Fourès, the flighty wife of a lieutenant, who had followed her husband to Egypt dressed in male uniform, and had caught the eye of General Buonaparte, possibly at first on account of her slender boyish appearance.

Pauline Fourès can be called Napoleon's first mistress, and his notorious affair with her marked a turning point in his life, and not only in his sex-life. Irrefutable evidence that Josephine had resumed her affair with Hippolyte Charles, which was now a public scandal, stifled what was left of Bonaparte's youthful idealism. In his bitter outcry to Joseph about the unfaithful wife, part of which is quoted in the previous chapter, he wrote that he was tired of glory at twenty-nine, and nothing was left for him but complete egoism.

The flagrantly shameless manner in which he now flaunted his own unfaithfulness suggests the betrayed husband's reaction to the realisation that Josephine did not love him. Whether or not it was intended as revenge for his humiliation, his conduct might have been designed to ensure that not only his Army in Egypt but the whole world knew about the Fourès affair.

He pursued Pauline relentlessly and drove about with her in his open carriage, attended on horseback by his stepson and aide-de-camp Eugène Beauharnais. He plumbed the depth of bad taste by taking her on his knee and kissing her repeatedly in Eugène's presence, and was most annoyed when next day Eugène asked Berthier to relieve him of further duty with the Commander-in-Chief. If he was trying to hurt Josephine through her son, he did not want to lose such a good officer, and thereafter he was more circumspect in Eugène's presence.

Pauline revelled in the situation, wearing dazzling uniforms in public – gold-braided coats, bright sashes, plumed hats, and always the tight white pantaloons which set off her trim figure, and perhaps kept the general enslaved.

Soon to Pauline's nickname of 'Bellilote' were added epithets such as Madame la Générale, Cleopatra, Our Lady of the Orient; and to the Arabs she was 'the Great Sultan's Lady'. To get her to himself Buonaparte sent Lieutenant Fourès to France with despatches, and installed her in a house near his own headquarters.

Whatever we may think of the general's conduct as a man he deserves nothing but censure as a military leader. A more humane and thoughtful commander would not have paraded the fact that he was so adequately provided with what most of his men lacked. Although some three hundred women, many of them dressed as men, sailed with the army to Egypt, there were not nearly enough to go round. Partly no doubt as a result of this, homosexual practices were prevalent, and, as we shall see, Buonaparte's open affair with Bellilote did not spare him from suspicion on this score.

Buonaparte's plot to secure the lieutenant's wife for himself was foiled by the British Navy, which captured the ship on which Fourès was sailing to France, took his despatches which proved to be worthless, kept the crew of the ship as prisoners-of-war, but landed him back in Egypt, on purpose to annoy 'Boney' it has been said. The general's affair was so widely known about in the Army of Egypt that it has been assumed that the English knew all about it through spies, and may have hoped to make things

Désirée Clary
From an engraving after a portrait by Gérard

Marie Walewska
From an engraving after a portrait by Robert Lefebre

The Countess de Montholon — The Count de Montholon
From 'Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène' by Frédéric Masson

Count Bertrand
From an engraving in the collection of Mr. Alfred D. Pardee

Countess Bertrand
From 'Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène' by Frédéric Masson

awkward for the enemy commander by returning an outraged husband to the carefully prepared love-nest.

That it was from such motives that the English were 'malicious enough to send Fourès back to Cairo', as Masson put it, was the opinion widely held in France at the time. Madame Junot certainly believed this. However it seems just as likely that the captain of *Lion*, the ship which captured Fourès, did not want to burden himself with unwanted prisoners during his long cruise in the Mediterranean, and chose to return Fourès because his mission had failed and he had given his parole. The enemy ship and its crew, a legitimate prize, would be in quite a different category to a naval officer. This was an age when courtesy and kindness to prisoners, and fraternisation between soldiers of opposing armies, was at least one pleasant feature of war.

It is also interesting that the subsequent publication of confidential letters revealing the French general's private family troubles, including his intention to divorce his wife, was strongly condemned in an editorial in an English paper *The Morning Chronicle*. It is nice to know that this sort of thing was not thought to be in keeping with our national dignity at the end of the eighteenth century.

General Buonaparte may have believed that 'perfidious Albion' would stoop to such a stratagem; but he was not the kind of general to bother overmuch about outraged husbands, especially those of junior rank. A military court was ordered to divorce Lieutenant Fourès and his wife, and Fourès had to submit. Napoleon was probably by then already a little tired of Pauline, though it is said that with his usual possessive jealousy he was quite indignant for a time when he was told that after his return to France she had become the mistress of his successor, General Kléber.

In due course Pauline herself returned to France; and Napoleon, after arranging her second marriage to a Count Henri de Ranchoup, continued after his fashion to treat her with considerable financial generosity. The romantically-minded Duchess of Abrantes was convinced that Pauline kept alive a warm affection for Napoleon until her death; but Masson, writing whilst she was still alive, poured cold water on this idea, claiming that she detested the Emperor's memory and was a devoted Royalist. When the Duchess in her memoirs repeated her story of undying love, Madame de Ranchoup herself took Masson's side and emphatically contradicted the Duchess. She outlived Napoleon for nearly fifty

years, remaining an object of occasional interest to Bonapartists.

By his liaison with Pauline Fourès in Egypt Napoleon had hoped to prove himself capable of procreation, but he finally announced: 'The little idiot does not know how to make a baby.' She vigorously denied that it was her fault, and some readers of this book may perhaps take her side, and echo her spirited retort: 'Who knows if I am the idiot?'

After his return from Egypt and eventual reconciliation with Josephine their marriage presented an outwardly respectable appearance consonant with his increasing importance in the political world. Josephine would have been wise to have made less fuss about his various liaisons, some of which were a by-product of his love of Italian music and of the stage. In his youth he had soaked himself in the history of Ancient Rome, and the dream growing in his mind of himself becoming a blend of Julius Caesar and Charlemagne heightened his interest in the lengthy classical dramas, full of heroic declamation, which were the vogue at the time. Both he and Josephine became regular theatre-goers and generous patrons of many actors and actresses.

Napoleon's friendship and admiration for the great Talma never wavered; and his name was associated with many actresses, the most important ones being Mesdemoiselles Grassini, Mars, Duchesnois, Gazzani, George and Bourgoin, whose backview he found 'enticing', according to the persistent Monsieur Breton.

Grassini could sing in a sweet soprano but her speaking voice was deep, and it was this which attracted Napoleon. Grassini described Napoleon's love-making as unsatisfying, and her comparison of him with other lovers was most unflattering to him. However, undue weight need not be given to her verdict, for it was said that she was less of a passionate lover than one who was especially interested in the material advantages of having a distinguished patron. She certainly aspired to exert political influence, but for that aim she set her cap at the wrong man – twice in fact, if it is true that she was Wellington's mistress in 1814.

Another woman, not an actress, can be relegated to the category of the self-seeking – Madame Belini, a charming Spaniard married to a Corsican, who tried to force herself upon the Emperor in Elba. After his second abdication, realising that he was leaving France without a mistress, she pursued him from Paris, dressed as a man and accompanied by her husband. To her surprise and distress Napoleon would have nothing to do with her. He

bought her off for three thousand francs. Claude Manceron's comment is significant: 'He did not even want to see them. Especially not her; no one seduced Napoleon twice.'

In pursuit of his actresses the First Consul did not of course haunt the stage door. Constant his valet, in a coach driven by the coachman César, more often than not a little drunk, would conduct the chosen lady to St Cloud, where sometimes nothing more than a discussion of the play was required of her. On other occasions she would be told to disrobe and await Napoleon's arrival; but quite often after waiting for hours she would be sent home. The mood had passed, or affairs of State had deflected his thoughts from dalliance.

It must have been very frustrating for the ladies, some of whom were never summoned again, and it is not surprising that many of them were rather caustic in their comments. Whether on the other side of the door frustration of some sort was at the bottom of Napoleon's failure to put in an appearance we can only guess.

The only one of his actresses to touch his heart was Mademoiselle George, with whom for at least two years, during his consulship, he maintained an affectionate relationship, from which it seems they both hoped a baby might result. Josephine had real cause for anxiety this time, for it was during his infatuation with his lovely Giorgina that Napoleon first raised the question of separate bedrooms. Madame de Rémusat told an amusing story of very unwillingly accompanying Josephine in an attempt to spy on Napoleon and Mademoiselle George. On the dark stairway outside the bedroom they stumbled upon Roustam, and fled in disorder. This same story, almost word for word, has been told in connection with Marie Walewska, a later mistress, which is an indication of the way in which Napoleon's amours became legendary.

Mademoiselle George's outstanding quality was her ability to make the First Consul laugh. At their first meeting, apart from the possibly symbolic destruction of the veil given to her by her former admirer, Napoleon was content with a long conversation about her life and career. Roustam was present in the background behind a screen, and although Mademoiselle George stayed until 5 a.m. nothing happened, in the sense in which we are here, somewhat improperly, interested. Masson tells us that Napoleon, with his genius for making hurtful remarks said: 'You must have hideous feet for you keep your stockings on.'

But perhaps we can respect him for some delicacy of feeling in

allowing the acquaintance to ripen into mutual affection. It was always characterised by a sort of youthful cheerfulness, which suggests that it gave him the welcome relief from formality which his nature demanded. He had few relaxations, but Giorgina could match him in his predilection for rather childish games. They played together like children at hide-and-seek, dressing-up, and charades, in a way which strengthens the impression that there was always something just a little immature about Napoleon's sex-life.

There is strong evidence of immaturity, and more than a hint of homosexuality, in Mademoiselle George's sex-life also. Like Napoleon she obviously suffered from some defect of the pituitary gland, and although she retained her striking beauty for a long time, she became pathologically fat. This may have hastened the ending of her hold over Napoleon, for he always detested fat women. Her enormous bulk was the source of many unkind jests, and finally won for her the nickname of 'The Whale'. She was a stickler for all the privileges of a prima donna, and an official of the theatre had to walk before her striking the floor with a white wand. Unkind friends used to say that he was testing the floorboards.

George became more than one man's mistress but no one seems to have wanted to marry her; and amongst all the heroic parts for which she became famous none sounds at all suggestive of feminine charm or appeal, despite her statuesque beauty. At least one leading actor found it repellent to have to act with her. Her real name was Marguerite Josephine Weymer, and the very masculine nickname (sometimes incorrectly spelled 'Georges') which she adopted as her stage name, was given to her by her protectress Mademoiselle Raucourt, an actress with an evil reputation.

Gertrude Aretz says of Mademoiselle Raucourt that 'she was very free in her ways, and rumour ran that she had more inclination towards persons of her own sex than towards men'.* She habitually dressed as a man, and was addressed as 'Papa' by the child of a Madame Ponty with whom she was living when George first met her.

Dressing up, in fact 'cross-dressing', seems to have been the order of the day, for later on when George fled from France to Russia, where she wanted to take a stage engagement for which she feared she would not get official French sanction, she was accompanied by a handsome young male ballet-dancer dressed as a

* *Napoleon and his Women Friends*, translated E. & C. Paul, Allen & Unwin, 1927

woman to evade detection at the frontier. This dancer, Duport, may have made just as unconvincing a maidservant as Prince Charles Edward Stuart had done when dressed as 'Betty Burke', during his escape from Scotland after his defeat at Culloden. I do not want to appear to clutch at straws in seeking for evidence of something a little odd in Napoleon's sex life. Nevertheless, in the story of Mademoiselle George and her association with Napoleon, there are a few straws which do seem to have been blowing around in a somewhat unusual wind. Some people must have thought so at the time; for in a contemporary book of erotic pictures one cartoon depicts Mademoiselle George indulging in homosexual relations with Mademoiselle Raucourt, whilst in another Napoleon is shown as being plainly much more interested in George than she is in him.

Napoleon's association with George did not long survive the humiliating scene after he had had some sort of seizure whilst in bed with her (already discussed in Chapter 2)[1].

It was in the summer of 1803, not long after the beginning of Napoleon's friendship with Mademoiselle George, that Madame Junot had some curious experiences with the First Consul. Laure Junot, later to become the Duchess of Abrantes, had been only eleven when Napoleon proposed to her mother, Madame Permon, and whether or not she knew that her mother had laughed at the idea, she herself had thought the young general rather a figure of fun. But by 1803 she had cause to be very grateful to a completely transformed Napoleon for considerable generosity to her and to her husband, whom he had made a general and the Governor of Paris.

During a visit to Malmaison, whilst Josephine was taking the waters at Plombières, Laure Junot had reason to fear that she would have to make it plain to the First Consul that her gratitude recognised certain limits. One morning Napoleon entered her room at 5 a.m., sat on her bed to read his morning correspondence, with an occasional remark to her, and after about an hour left her with an affectionate pinch which seemed to her to threaten further developments. After the visit had been repeated the next day she locked the door and told her maid to admit nobody. Sure enough next morning the door was rattled, and she heard Napoleon talking to her maid. Shortly afterwards there he was on her bed again, having fetched a key and got in by another door. He was rather cross, and asked her if she was afraid of being murdered,

and said that he would call her early next morning for a hunting expedition.

That day her husband came for a visit and, though he should not have spent a night away from Paris without the First Consul's permission, she persuaded him to stay. Next morning Napoleon was surprised to find him in bed with her. Junot was even more surprised, and asked Napoleon what he wanted with his wife so early in the morning. Napoleon, in a bit of a temper, reminded Junot that he could punish him for his absence from Paris; but agreed that Laure was the one who should be punished for persuading her husband to stay. This was the end of the strange early morning visits, and we are left with no explanation for them, except another pointer that Napoleon was, for some reason or other, strangely inhibited from developing completely normal happy relationships with people.

The next two ladies to be noticed, Madame Duchâtel, and Mademoiselle Denuelle, have a certain significance as they were pawns in the game played by the Bonapartes, and especially by Caroline and her husband Joachim Murat, to get rid of Josephine by throwing other women at Napoleon's head in order that he might beget children, and so prove that Josephine was responsible for the infertility of the marriage.

Madame Duchâtel was a very pretty young lady-in-waiting to Josephine, and Eugène Beauharnais had been strongly attracted by her, until he found that she was simply using him as cover. Her elderly husband, thirty years older than herself, was a Councillor of State. Fair, slender, accomplished, indeed an intellectual, she was attractive as well as pretty; though with a rather beaky nose, a straw if not quite a life-raft at which poor faded Josephine could clutch. She was a coquette, but could appear cold and reserved when it was necessary to put Josephine off the scent. Caroline connived in arranging meetings between Napoleon and Madame Duchâtel, and Murat co-operated by pretending to be in love with her himself. This affair began during the Consulate, and reached its height in 1806. It was something more than an innocent flirtation, and it caused Josephine prolonged jealous anxiety.

Writers of contemporary memoirs, such as Madame Junot, Constant and Madame de Rémusat, refrained from naming Madame Duchâtel other than as Madame D—. One feels that Napoleon's infatuation cannot have long survived an occasion when, according to Bertrand, Madame Duchâtel 'burst out laughing one evening at Malmaison, and said "Aha! so the Empress

says that you are no use at all; that it's just like so much piss" '. This could hardly have been Napoleon's idea of a joke, and it is an indication of the moral climate of his Court that a lady could speak or joke about such a subject to any man, let alone to the Emperor.

Once when Josephine caught Napoleon with Madame Duchâtel he so hotly resented her spying that the most terrible scene took place. Napoleon smashed everything within reach, threw Josephine's own infidelities in her teeth, using the cruellest language of which he was capable, and threatened to go ahead with the divorce immediately. As usual Josephine got out of this scrape by resorting to tears. Violent quarrels and affectionate reconciliations, which many novelists and playwrights seem to regard as essential ingredients of marriage, were very much a part of life with the Bonapartes. Even after this Madame Duchâtel calmly denied her guilt when at last Josephine, encouraged by Napoleon who was weary of Madame Duchâtel, gave her quite a kindly homily about her indiscreet behaviour and the need for a young woman like her to consider her reputation. At one time she certainly delighted in parading the fact that she was Napoleon's favourite, and could humiliate Josephine. For Madame Duchâtel it can at least be said that she remained faithful to the end, gracing Napoleon's Court during the Hundred Days, and paying a farewell visit after the final abdication.

The fuss which Josephine made about Madame Duchâtel, and some other mistresses, suggests that Napoleon was indulging his need for self-justification when he told Bertrand that Josephine had herself encouraged him to take mistresses, in order to keep him, and to stave off the divorce.

Fortified by her eventual triumph over Madame Duchâtel Josephine, the only woman with whom Napoleon could really relax and be himself, had little difficulty in breaking up a half-hearted affair with a Mademoiselle Lacoste. She was one of Josephine's 'readers', so she presumably had time on her hands, since Mademoiselle Avrillon, the ladies-maid, testified that no one ever read a word to Josephine.

Napoleon's care for the reputation of his family circle might have prevented him from having much to do with Louise Cathérine Eléonore Denuelle de la Plaigne, if his sister Caroline and her husband had not deliberately organised an intimate association between this member of their household and Napoleon, as part of their untiring campaign to separate him from Josephine. Despite

her aristocratic name, to which she was probably not entitled, Eléonore Denuelle was the daughter of very shady parents, and was the separated wife of an adventurer, the bogus 'Captain' Revel. Her claim to respectability was that she had been for a time at the aristocratic school of Madame Campan where Hortense Beauharnais and Caroline Bonaparte had been educated. This helped her to get employment with the Murats as a reader – a kind of secretary.

Her rôle in history was to provide Napoleon with 'evidence' that he was capable of becoming a father, and thus to further the schemes of the Bonapartes and bring the divorce of Josephine one step nearer. Napoleon at first gladly accepted the paternity of her son born in 1806, but was later tortured by doubts, which were shared by Josephine and Hortense her daughter, who knew all about the affair. These doubts, which have been shared by many historians, will be examined in some detail in Chapter 10. Meanwhile we may regard Napoleon's acceptance of her child as his son as another turning-point in his sex-life. The road to divorce and remarriage was now clear.

Four years after the birth of Eléonore's son Napoleon claimed to be the father of another boy – a child of love this time rather than the result of a calculated experiment. This was the son of Marie Walewska, the beautiful young Polish countess whose love for Napoleon has inspired romantic novels, plays and films. Of her love for him there seems to be little doubt, but it is not so easy to be certain about his love for her.

Marie Walewska was nearly nineteen years old when she first met Napoleon, and she had been married for about three years to an elderly Polish nobleman to whom she had recently presented a son. She had been strictly brought up and was deeply religious, with high moral principles so deeply instilled into her as to be her second nature, if we can believe most of the books about her. But over-riding everything was her intense patriotism, and Polish patriotism then, as ever since, was passionately devoted to restoration of the independence and sovereignty of the beloved country. Her tutor, Nicholas Chopin, was the father of Poland's great composer and patriot, Frédéric Chopin.

When, at the age of sixteen, she was offered a choice of two suitors, she rejected the younger one because he was a Russian, and chose to become the wife of a rather senile old man because he was Polish – Count Walewski, the *grand seigneur* of the district,

who had rendered distinguished services to the last king of Poland. But he was over seventy, his youngest grandson was twenty-five, nearly ten years older than herself, and Marie's life in his ancestral castle cannot have been very exciting.

When she decided to drive with a friend to see and welcome Napoleon on his way to Warsaw, it was no passing whim to relieve the tedium of country life. The name of Napoleon had been a household word in her family since she was nine, and from the age of about fifteen she had cultivated a hero-worship for this mighty conqueror who might one day re-establish Poland as an independent kingdom. It is not at all surprising that the glamour of the growing Napoleonic Legend should have captured the imagination of this romantic and intensely nationalistic young girl, when men like Hegel and Goethe had hailed Napoleon as the Messiah of a new order in Europe; and Beethoven had learned of the Emperor's coronation only just in time to tear the dedication page from his Sinfonia Grande Napoléon Bonaparte, which we now know as the great Eroica. Older Polish women were going into raptures over Napoleon, and spoke of him as seeming to be almost divine.

So it was in a state of high excitement that Marie Walewska and her friend joined the crowd at the post-house of Bronie, and begged General Duroc to help them to get a sight of the Emperor. Napoleon was enchanted as with sparkling eyes this lovely girl breathlessly made her little speech of welcome; but, although he gave her a bouquet with some meaning glances and warm words about future meetings, she barely realised the passion which she had aroused.

She had not long to wait, for as soon as news of the Emperor's interest in her began to spread, as a result of his insistence that she must be found and brought to Court, the leading Poles, realising the possibilities of using her to influence Napoleon, spared no pains to gratify his wishes. It is quite painful to read of the relentless pressure which was applied to her by Prince Poniatowski and others, and by her family, including her rather stupid old husband, who knew nothing of the encounter at Bronie, and thought that all this insistence on her attendance at Court was a tribute to his own position and past services.

Marie was appalled when she realised what was expected of her, but she seems to have been alone in thinking that it was too high a price that she should be encouraged to give herself to Napoleon for her country's sake. Other Polish women said that in her place they would have felt honoured. There really must have been

something quite out of the ordinary about that man!

The extent of Napoleon's infatuation is shown by the fact that in his letters he actually made half-promises to help Poland for Marie's sake, though he never allowed women to influence his political decisions. Of course she had to yield in the end, but she went down fighting, which greatly intrigued Napoleon who seldom encountered such maidenly resistance. She rather offended her relatives, and surprised Napoleon, by going to Court in a simple white gown with a garland of flowers. She kept Napoleon at arm's length, quietly evaded his flirtatious advances, and refused to play his little game at table, of wearing the flowers which he had given her and touching them when he laid his hand on his heart, as a sign that she would return his love.

In fact she pointedly told him that she had given his flowers to her baby son, and clearly indicated that she was hoping against hope that he would fulfil his promises to help Poland in return for a purely platonic friendship. When the pace quickened she was alarmed and offended by his ardent approaches, and dissolved in a passion of weeping which greatly disconcerted her hopeful lover.

She said later that at first she had worshipped Napoleon from afar, but close up he terrified her. In the end this romantic girl, very young though not inexperienced, was worn down by the relentless pressure of Polish statesmen urging her, for the sake of her country, to respond to Napoleon's wooing, which by now was both ardent and somewhat rough. She claimed that finally, whilst Napoleon was vigorously persuading her to yield, and threatening that if she refused he would crush Poland as he crushed his watch, which he then flung down and ground beneath his heel, she fainted. Finding when she recovered that Napoleon had been able to 'consummate her sacrifice', she saw no point in further resistance. In fact, it has been said, she was virtually raped.

Thereafter, however, his magnetic, almost feminine power to charm, and a gentleness which he could practise when it suited him, finally won her heart; and her surrender seems to have been more whole-hearted than that of any other woman in his life. Perhaps she was helped to love him by memories of her childhood hero-worship. Perhaps she came to understand the immature side of his nature, his need for reassurance in the sexual sphere, and found this somehow touching in the great conqueror – an appeal to her maternal feelings.

She told him that she was surprised that a great general should indulge in such schoolboy tricks as the sign language used between

him and Duroc. She never got the reward for which she had made her ultimate surrender, but she gave him a pure, tender, unselfish love which it is hard to discern in any other woman in his life, except perhaps Désirée, who was never given a chance.

Now it was Napoleon who was finding excuses to prevent Josephine from joining him at his field headquarters – a very different story from those old days in the Italian campaign. He took great precautions to keep this love affair secret from Josephine, though of course this was not possible after Marie had joined him in Paris. Josephine deliberately threw the attractive young Mademoiselle Guillebeau in his way in an attempt to detach him from Walewska. Marie's complacent old husband surrendered her to Napoleon, and a separation was quietly arranged. Thenceforward Napoleon was to Marie her all, her future, and her life, as she told Constant.

A son attributed to Napoleon was born on 4th May 1810, and Marie's husband generously allowed her to have the child at his castle of Walewice, so that he was officially recognised as a Walewski. When Marie returned to Paris after the child's birth Napoleon's life was filled by his new Empress, and he could spare little time for his mistress. But she stuck to him through all the changes that lay ahead, and it was she who came to console him in his dark hour after his first abdication. She waited for a whole night but, although almost everyone had abandoned him, including his wife, he never sent for her. He regretted this; and said to Constant: 'She must have felt humiliated, poor woman. Tell her when you see her how sorry I am. But I had so many things here!' – touching his forehead.

It was Marie Walewska again who came to see him in Elba, and as she brought the four-year old Alexandre with her local rumour insisted that the secret visitors were the ex-Empress and the King of Rome. The faithful Marie, after a visit cut short by Napoleon, was hustled off the island, made to take a perilous ride in darkness along rocky paths to embark on a night of rising storm, which made Napoleon momentarily fear that he had sent his true love to her death in his eagerness to avoid compromising himself in a way which might give Marie Louise a further pretext for not joining him in his exile.

Himself! that was all he usually thought of. But this time it may have been a little different. Caulaincourt, who knew better than most men how cold and unmoved Napoleon's heart could be, may have discerned something unusual in Napoleon's feelings for Marie.

In 1812 during the long sleigh journey after leaving the army in Russia, he had the greatest difficulty in preventing Napoleon from turning aside to visit Marie at the castle of Walewice, though this would have greatly increased the risk of capture as the region was swarming with Cossacks.[2]

During the Hundred Days Marie Walewska was by his side again, though Marie Louise, for one reason or another, stayed in the enemy camp whilst her husband was making his last magnificent attempt to recover all he had lost. Marie Walewska, again unlike Marie Louise, was willing to share his exile in St Helena, but was not allowed to do so.

In 1816 she married Count d'Ornano, a cousin of the Emperor, who had at one time been a colonel in the Imperial Guard. She bore him a child in June 1817 but did not recover from this confinement and died some six months later. Napoleon, who had been annoyed to hear that his discarded mistress Pauline Fourès had been taken on by his successor General Kléber, felt piqued and abandoned when he learned of Marie's marriage. This reaction, like Napoleon's generosity to those who had been his mistresses and the interest which he continued to take in them, strikes me less as an estimable trait than as a symptom of his egotism. He tried to bind them to him for life, as if he felt that to have been loved by the great Napoleon, or even to have been used by him, should last anyone for life.

But Marie Walewska clearly meant a lot to him during the years of her wonderful self-less devotion to the selfish creature. It was not without good cause that his face assumed an 'expression of slightly contrite gravity', whenever he thought of her, which Claude Manceron tells us was noticeable to his intimate friends.

Marie Walewska was unquestionably Napoleon's most loved mistress. Was she also the last?

Historians have been unable to agree about whether Napoleon had affairs in St Helena, particularly with Mesdames Bertrand and Montholon; with anyone else it was virtually impossible. As is so often the case it all boils down to which gossip one is prepared to believe. Napoleon himself well knew how vulnerable he was to scandal. When Esther Vesey, a servant in the Bertrand household and the mistress of Napoleon's valet Marchand, had a baby, he said cynically that he would assuredly be accused of making her pregnant, since valets were always blamed for royal bastards.

Jean Savant, an assiduous purveyor of gossip, states bluntly that

the Countess de Montholon gave Napoleon a daughter, her husband being complaisant, as 'he was to get several million francs for it'. Lord Rosebery did not deign to notice the scandal. Frédéric Masson calls Madame de Montholon a 'worthless intrigante' and a 'retired courtesan', and concludes that *la femme y joua son rôle. Voila tout qu'on peut dire* – 'plied her trade in the island' is the rather pointed translation in the American edition. R.F. Delderfield, like Masson, reserves judgement, and another modern historian, Dr Paul Ganière, who devotes three volumes to Napoleon's life in St Helena, finds the Montholon canard 'hardly probable'. Octave Aubry, also unconvinced, quotes the opinion of Dr Verling[3] that Madame Bertrand had been 'half hysterical' when she told him that Madame de Montholon's second daughter born in St Helena 'might very well be the Emperor's daughter'; Madame Bertrand herself did not escape the scandal-mongers but most historians agree with Masson who exonerates her completely. Joseph Turquan mentions the rumours of 'distractions' but holds that Napoleon was faithful to Marie Louise to the end. The opinion of Tighe Hopkins that there is 'not an ounce of proof' about the scandals, is shared by Monsieur Gilbert Martineau, the French consul in St Helena and today's foremost authority on Napoleon's life in the island.[4]

St Helena was overcrowded as a result of Napoleon's incarceration there, and this particularly applied to Longwood House, where Napoleon lived with the Montholons, the bachelor General Gourgaud, and his valets and other domestic staff. General Bertrand and his wife lived a short distance away at Hutts Gate.

Albine de Montholon had been twice divorced for adultery before she married Count de Montholon. Captain Maitland found her 'quiet and unassuming' on board *Bellerophon*, but his judgement for once seems to have been faulty. Masson's opinion of her is shared by many. She set her cap at Lieutenant Basil Jackson and other British officers. She ably abetted her husband in the game of jockeying for position in Napoleon's favour and did her best to enliven the earlier years of Napoleon's exile, before he had decided to resign himself to his fate and to ensure that history regarded it as martyrdom. She may well have tried to captivate him, but suggestions that her husband was paid several million francs to allow her to become the Emperor's mistress are typical of the canards which embellished Napoleon's life, and it is pleasant to see that Vincent Cronin in his book *Napoleon*, like the great Lord Rosebery, does not deign to notice them.

Whilst in the island of Elba Napoleon had been closely watched by spies; and Robert Christophe, who has scrutinised that phase of his life, considers that there is no evidence to support any of the love affairs with which he was credited during his brief and busy stay on that island. In St Helena he was even more surrounded by watchful eyes, eyes sharpened by the cat-and-mouse game played by the Governor and his prisoner. This involved Hudson Lowe or one of his minions being compelled to see Napoleon somehow or other, every day; whilst Napoleon delighted in hiding himself, hoping that his enemy might have a miserable night, tortured by fears that the dreaded escape might have taken place.

Napoleon wanted Hudson Lowe to think that there were still women prepared to comfort and even aid the prisoner. This troubled the enemy and flattered his own vanity. This was something about which the British Government wanted to know; and when Dr Baxter who had been chief medical officer in St Helena returned to London he was asked outright by Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, if Napoleon had a mistress and if Mesdames Bertrand and Montholon were 'condescending'.

The Allied Commissioners[5] who, like the Governor, were unable to see Napoleon for themselves, could only rely on gossip for something – anything, to put in their reports to their Governments. There was no lack of gossip on that small island of which the resources were inadequate to keep its unnaturally swollen population amused. The British garrison no less than the detainees became increasingly bored as the years went by. Love affairs and intrigues flourished, and apart from an occasional race meeting there was little to do but gossip about these. Hundreds of ears were thus alert to pick up any whisper from inside the small estate which encompassed the world of the man who had once aspired to rule the universe.

The principal source of whispers was General Gourgaud, who, as will emerge in my next chapter, has a good claim to be regarded as the most extraordinary individual in St Helena, next to Napoleon. Dr Verling, as Monsieur de Langle says, could only echo Gourgaud's insinuations, and of course unlike Gourgaud he had no axe to grind; no cause to hate the Montholons, who were his patients. Gourgaud did not really insinuate or whisper – he declared loud and clear that when he returned to Europe he would publish abroad that Montholon was a pimp and his wife a tart – '*Montholon est un "plat" et sa femme une p . . . .*'

This opinion of Albine was a widely held one, and, human nature being what it is, it was inevitable that some people in the island were prepared to believe that Napoleon had slept with her. At least one of the Commissioners believed this. Baron Stürmer passed on the scandal to Metternich; but the reliable Count Balmain, normally eager to keep the Tsar amused with spicy stories about the man who had been both his enemy and his close friend, was silent. More significant, perhaps, is the fact that Hudson Lowe, who conceived it to be his duty, as it eventually became his obsession, to spy on Napoleon, about whom he was always ready to believe the worst, went out of his way, in a report to Lord Bathurst, to 'acknowledge particularly the right and correct line of conduct that the Countess Bertrand, as well indeed as Countess Montholon, have invariably maintained'.

During Madame Montholon's second pregnancy Napoleon taunted her with trying to emulate Madame Tallien, in being 'always with a peaked belly'. Surely if he had himself been responsible for her condition this would have been beyond even Napoleon's capacity for coarse vulgarity.[6]

Fanny Bertrand, the daughter of an Irishman, General Dillon, was a distant relative of Josephine. She was not a woman whom men overlooked. She was more beautiful and less shop-soiled than Albine de Montholon. Her Irish-Creole ancestry had produced a spirited, excitable personality. On board *Bellerophon,* appalled by the thought that she and her husband were to accompany Napoleon to St Helena, she staged a splendid scene, during which she tried to throw herself overboard; Bertrand held on to her legs, whilst Savary who did not like her, roared with laughter, shouting 'Let her go, Let her go!'

Napoleon is said to have disliked this somewhat imperious young woman, knowing that she had tried to prevent Bertrand, whom he still believed to be blindly devoted to him, from going to St Helena. He certainly could be disgustingly rude to her on occasions, especially at table. Dr Warden, the chief medical officer of *Northumberland*, described a little incident soon after their arrival in St Helena, when he drove in a carriage with Napoleon and the Bertrands. Napoleon threw his arm around Fanny, crying to Warden: 'This is my mistress.' Then affecting to fear that he had used the wrong English word, he substituted 'love', but finally settled for 'friend'. Bertrand meanwhile was laughing heartily, and Dr Warden, who said that Napoleon was the life of the party, thought that he was trying to rally Madame Bertrand, who was

depressed after a recent illness. All very innocent.

Towards the end of his life, in pain and often delirious, Napoleon conceived the remarkable delusion that the eminently respectable Madame Bertrand was a whore, and that he ought to have made her his mistress. He abused Dr Antommarchi for preventing him from doing so. Fanny's plan to return to Europe for the education of her children, which was cancelled when it seemed that Napoleon might be dying, infuriated him. He looked upon it as abandonment of a potential lover and a slur on his ability to attract her. His estrangement from Bertrand has even been attributed to his inability to 'cuckold' him. Monsieur Vox finds this 'sexual rancour' about Madame Bertrand frightening in a dying man. Mr Cronin accurately diagnoses it as fantasy. It was clearly part of the toxaemia of the condition which was soon to end his unhappy, desperately lonely existence.

If the cramped conditions in Longwood made misconduct with Fanny or Albine so difficult as to be highly unlikely, it was even more impossible for Napoleon to import any woman from outside, whom he might have met when he used to drive about the island. A Miss Mason, in whose house he used to sit for hours, was described by Aubry as 'an old maid with mannish ways'. Then, of course, there was the attractive young Miss Robinson, whom Napoleon nicknamed The Nymph. Shortly after she got married Napoleon met the newly-wed couple out walking, and he warmly and impulsively embraced and kissed – *not* The Nymph, but her young husband, lamely excusing himself by explaining that he could not help it, as the young man strongly resembled his brother Joseph. Surely even the French must agree that such behaviour was odd.

I think we can safely regard Marie Walewska as Napoleon's last mistress; and I am content to agree with Monsieur Gilbert Martineau that the stories of affairs with women in St Helena are 'stupid insinuations'.

Various writers have believed that Napoleon was not truly attractive to women; that those who became his mistresses were attracted by his wealth and the splendour of his position; and that women in general avenged their sex by regarding him, as he regarded them, which was with contempt. Lieutenant-General Raoul Brice considered that most of his mistresses were temporary episodes. Caulaincourt, the recipient of many confidences and self-revealing admissions, who could always speak very frankly

with Napoleon, wrote of his habit of boasting about his success with women and the preference which society women always showed for him; but he added:

> It is a mistake to think that he had many mistresses. He lost his head sometimes, it is true, but it was rarely that he felt any need of love, or indeed any pleasure in it. The Emperor was so eager to recount his amorous successes that one might almost have imagined that he only engaged in them for the sake of talking about them.

This verdict by one of Napoleon's most intimate friends, and a very sensitive kind of man he seems to have been, exactly fits my own reading of Napoleon's character.

Perhaps Napoleon, with his penchant for intrigue, the secret sign language used by him and Duroc, his intermediary in many little affairs, and all that romantic play with flowers, qualifies for the rather inadequate and somehow feminine designation – flirt; i.e. 'one who . . . plays at courtship'. (O.E.D.) Flirtation and its associated courtly gallantry were prevalent in the 18th and 19th Centuries. It has been called a dying art, possibly because it is not regarded nowadays as so vital to avoid things going too far.

Hippolyte Charles, Napoleon's rival for Josephine's affection, was a flirt, a gigolo, a lady's man all his life, but not, thinks Claude Manceron, a marrying man. He supplanted Napoleon so easily because he had all the gallantry and the desire to please, which Napoleon usually lacked. Usually – but not with the beloved Walewska, at first anyhow. She has often been called the great romance of his life. But his self-centred nature, ready to take all but give only what suited his own immediate purpose, would in any case have made her the great love *in* his life rather than *of* his life. Indeed, even before he could claim to have been abandoned by Marie, it was always of Josephine that he spoke as the real love of his life.

Beginning without true love or understanding of him, Josephine may in the end have come to love him a little for himself, as well as for the security which he could give to her and to her children and grandchildren. The truth of this can never be known; but, although I have already said that she deserved praise for making as much as she did make of their marriage, it seems to me that she must also take the blame for a considerable measure of failure. If she had had a really inspired understanding of his complex

character, and could have met him on ground of his own choosing, so to speak, she might have given him a lot more than early reassurance.

Jacques Bainville believes that the mainspring of Napoleon's personality was the ability to be impressed by his own life. He had an amazing capacity for standing outside himself and examining his own life-story with wondering admiration. This tendency to take a romantic view of oneself, which in Napoleon's case was magnified by the intensive reading of his early years, was very much the spirit of the age in post-Revolutionary France. Masson expressed it thus:

> The warriors of the Empire all endeavoured to model themselves upon this ideal and imaginary knight. If they did not bind a scarf of their ladies' colours across their breasts, hundreds of them carried on their swords a tassel embroidered by beloved hands, wore a portrait of her next their hearts, and decked themselves before a battle with some love token.

Josephine never captured the romantic, idealistic quality of Napoleon's character, and she failed to realise that his victories were won for her, as a knight may lay the spoils of war at his lady's feet. Madame de Staël or Madame de Rémusat, both of whom disliked Napoleon, could nevertheless have helped Josephine to perceive the underlying spirit of his passionate letters – those letters 'like the letters written by lovers in novels' (Belloc); 'the constant cry from the hungry heart' (Masson) . . . 'Ah Josephine! Josephine!' It is pathetic to think how seldom and how inadequately those outpourings were answered.

His letters to Marie Louise were dull and prosaic, but she always answered them, and when he was pre-occupied with the anxieties of the 1814 campaign she sent him many more loving letters than she received – even if she was simultaneously and treacherously writing to Neipperg.

Romantic fantasy may not be a very sound foundation for the development of a normal family life, but I feel that if Josephine had understood this side of Napoleon's nature, and had used all her charm and gaiety to play up to it, she might have retained his undivided affection. He might then have been content to go ahead with one of his various plans for adopting an heir instead of restlessly seeking evidence of his own ability to father one for

himself.

He had turned from the attractive and loving young Désirée Clary to a succession of women much older than himself, and mostly widows, before finally choosing Josephine. He admitted that she gave him the reassurance which he sought, and it may be unfair to blame her too much for failing to come to grips with his complex personality during a honeymoon of less than two days. But had she been less frivolous and more perceptive she might have helped him to grow to full maturity in his sex life, relieving it of that 'curious sterility' referred to by Mr Delderfield. For the literary man's expression 'sterility' I would substitute the medical diagnosis 'immaturity'. It was this immaturity which accounted for the homosexual element in his nature, which must now be examined.

CHAPTER VIII

NAPOLEON AND THE MALE SEX

Norwood Young, who made a very detailed study of Napoleon, believed that the many-sided nature of his character and achievements upsets people's mental processes and leads to the formulation of odd theories. To many readers the suggestion of a homosexual component in Napoleon's nature will no doubt seem to be a very odd theory. My own researches had led me to the conclusion that Napoleon must have had homosexual tendencies, and I knew that he had been included in a list of homosexual monarchs compiled by the prolific writer, and explorer, Sir Richard Burton; but it was only after an extensive search through the Napoleonic literature that I learned, from a contribution by Dr N. Praetorius to the scientific journal *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft* in 1922, that the suggestion had been made by one or two writers. Allegations of various other sexual perversions were also mentioned in the article. Some of these can be dismissed as malicious propaganda; but hints of homosexuality were made by at least one authoritative contemporary, General Maximilien Foy,[1] and were subsequently repeated by Dr Cabanes and other medical writers.

Dr Praetorius comes down heavily, I might almost say ponderously, against the conclusion that Napoleon had homosexual tendencies. However, he examined only two friendships – with Duroc the Grand Marshal of the Palace, and with the young Las Cases – whereas in this chapter I shall describe many more indications that such tendencies did exist. Let us begin with the two cases considered by Dr Praetorius.

Napoleon himself laid claim to only one great friendship, when he said:

> Friendship is only a name. I love nobody. I do not even love my brothers, except perhaps Joseph a little, from habit and because he is my elder; and Duroc, I love him too; but why?

Because his character pleases me; he is stern and resolute and I believe the fellow never shed a tear.

Geraud Christophe Michel Duroc, Duke of Friuli, was three years younger than Napoleon, whose aide-de-camp he became in 1796, after first meeting his future Emperor at Toulon. He distinguished himself in several actions; but it caused some consternation among more senior generals when, in 1805, Napoleon appointed his thirty-three-year-old favourite to command Oudinot's famous division, the Grenadiers Oudinot, in Germany. Of course Napoleon's generals and marshals were mostly very young; and Marshal Oudinot, who had been wounded, was only thirty-eight at the time. But Duroc superseded many men much senior to him in the Army.

For fifteen years Duroc was Napoleon's most intimate confidant, not only in affairs of State, but in the most personal and private matters. He acted as go-between in many of Napoleon's love affairs; and, after being appointed Grand Marshal of the Palace in 1804, it was his duty to supervise every detail of the Emperor's living and working conditions; his safety, food, amusements and social life. In the Tuileries he had a small bedroom next to the Emperor's, and they often used to take long walks incognito in the early hours of the morning. They had a private sign language used only between themselves which, as I have said, struck Marie Walewska as rather schoolboyish.

Savary, once one of the Emperor's younger aides-de-camp and also exceptionally privileged and patronised by him, described Duroc as 'the man who was most necessary to the Emperor', and wrote that after his death Napoleon in moments of stress would actually cry out: 'Ah Duroc! Duroc!' Napoleon was not the only one who missed Duroc. Because of the complete trust which the Emperor had in him, Duroc was often able to save both Napoleon and his potential victims from the worst excesses of his sudden outbursts of violent anger.

After Napoleon became Emperor no one outside his family circle could *tutoyer* him – except Duroc. Duroc and Napoleon were seldom separated, and at the end Duroc was to receive a signal reward for his devotion, for his remains were buried in the Invalides, where he lies beside the Emperor whose coffin was brought there in 1840 from St Helena.

Duroc has often been described as being cold and even repelling in his demeanour. Napoleon knew better. 'Duroc,' he said, 'had

lively, tender, and concealed passions, little corresponding with the coldness of his manner.' Napoleon told Las Cases that 'Duroc was the only man who had possessed his intimacy and entire confidence'. Las Cases' own opinion was that 'Duroc loved the Emperor for himself; it was rather to the individual personally that his devotion was attached, than to the monarch'. Napoleon's love for Duroc has never been questioned, but opinions have differed as to whether Duroc really liked the Emperor, or secretly disliked him, as some thought. Duroc was fatally wounded towards the end of the battle of Bautzen. He himself replaced his bowels which were lying on the ground. Lengthy and touching descriptions of a long visit by Napoleon to his dying friend, and of their conversation which only ended when Duroc begged the Emperor to leave, because his wound was of so distressing a nature, have been doubted by some historians who have held that Duroc was unconscious before Napoleon arrived. When informed that Duroc had been struck Napoleon was aghast and incredulous – 'Duroc! Impossible! He was at my side just now.'

What cannot be doubted is Napoleon's terrible grief after Duroc's death, and his strange and uncharacteristic behaviour. He called off the action, and would see no one for the rest of that day and night. He later bought the farmyard where Duroc had died, and erected a monument there.

Dr Warden, the senior doctor of *Northumberland*, the ship which took Napoleon to St Helena, was told by Madame Bertrand about Napoleon's extravagant grief after Duroc's death. He wrote that:

> She represented Napoleon's grief as perfectly romantic, and stated as a fact that he lay, for it is not to be supposed that he slept, a whole night on the stone which covered the grave of his friend.

Unusual conduct for a general at an important point in a campaign, and strangely reminiscent of the even more unbalanced behaviour of Alexander the Great after the death of his favourite, Hephaestion.[2]

Louis Adolphe Thiers, the French politician and author of a massive history of the Consulate and Empire, a glorious period in his country's history which spanned the impressionable years of his own childhood and early youth, was 17 at the time of Duroc's death. He wrote of Napoleon's grief, his face bathed with tears as

he sat on some fascines near an outpost, oblivious alike to the stray shots of skirmishers, and a soldier's dog licking his hands, which lay listlessly on his knees. Thiers said that much speculation was aroused by certain dying words attributed to Duroc: 'I have nothing to reproach myself with'. This was believed to be a reference to some unjust reproaches by Napoleon, who, said Thiers, did not spare even those whom he esteemed the most. Perhaps the memory of a recent disagreement sharpened his sorrow.

But, whatever the reason, it was most unlike Napoleon to allow his grief for Duroc to interfere with his conduct of a campaign; and he was later to confess that his failure to exploit his victory at Bautzen had been the greatest mistake of his life. Was it because he had lost Duroc? Emil Ludwig clearly thought that it was, for he compared Napoleon's inaction on this occasion with his previous conduct when 'he concealed his heartache and stormed onwards, even when he had lost his wife's love.' Was his love for Duroc more important?

The passage in General Foy's *History of the Peninsular War* which has been interpreted as implying that the friendship between Napoleon and Duroc was a homosexual one is on page 233 of the second volume. It was translated thus in 1827:[3]

> No other person was entrusted with so many and such important political secrets. The turn of his mind, which had more correctness than profundity, his perfect steadiness, and more than all, the empire of habit, had placed him upon the footing of a privy confidant. Another name would have been given to the connexion of Duroc with Napoleon if a prince of his disposition could ever have a favourite.

For Dr Praetorius much turns upon what General Foy may have meant by the word *favori*, which he believes conveys no sexual connotation, except in relation to the mistresses or 'lady-loves' of sovereigns. (In this the doctor is not supported by Robert's French dictionary.[4])

Dr Praetorius is concerned to throw doubt on the possibility of a homosexual relationship of a physical sort between Napoleon and Duroc. I am sure that he is right to do so; and suggestions to the contrary were probably the evil work of scurrilous pamphleteers. It would have been quite alien to Napoleon's character to have stooped to sodomy. The same applies to many homosexual men, who lead completely chaste lives; so the question, to which

in any case we shall never know the answer, is an irrelevant one.

However, I must disagree with Dr Praetorius when he finds it absurd to suppose that, even if Napoleon had had homosexual tendencies, he would have chosen for such a relationship a general of about his own age, rather than a good-looking effeminate youth – *'hübsche Epheben, weibähnliche Jungen'*. Medical experts who have attempted to analyse male homosexual attraction have found that, just as men are attracted by different types of women, and are stimulated by different aspects of female anatomy, so it is quite erroneous to suppose that homosexual men are only attracted by the feminine type of man, still less by boys, an attraction which many of them regard as an unsatisfactory, if not disreputable, perversion. Many seem to be drawn to rough, virile, even coarse-fibred males; so it is not out of the question that there may have been some homosexual element in Napoleon's devotion to Duroc.

Much broader hints of homosexuality than those of General Foy are to be found in the article on Duroc in the *Biographie Universelle* of Michaud (1855), in which the term *favori* is used rather pointedly three times. It includes the passage:

> For fifteen years he was constantly the confidant of the greatest projects, and the smallest intrigues; he was even frequently the accommodating agent of the most secret pleasures of his master. (*le ministre complaisant des plaisirs les plus secrets de son maître.*)

Because it gave scant regard to Duroc's military ability, and for its overt hostility, this Michaud biography was strongly denounced by A. Sauzay, the author of a longer article on Duroc in the *Nouvelle Biographie* of Dr Hoefer (1856). Sauzay asserts that the Michaud biography of Duroc first appeared in 1814, which is interesting. Napoleon may not have been at the pinnacle of power at that time, but he still knew how to deal with a hostile Press.

In 1811 that eccentric character Lewis Goldsmith wrote very disparagingly of Duroc's ability, and, to account for the Emperor employing him in such responsible positions, said that 'the scandalous chronicle of Paris accounts for it in a way which I think unfit to mention.' We shall see later that Goldsmith was not always so mealy-mouthed about Napoleon's homosexual leanings, but he is not a man whose uncorroborated testimony should be accepted. He was at one time very friendly with Napoleon and

Talleyrand, in their pay, and writing pro-revolutionary propaganda; but he later changed sides. The ease with which Goldsmith seems to have been able to slip from France to England and back again suggests that he may have been some sort of double agent. But he certainly knew a great deal about the Bonapartes. The article in *Biographie Michaud*, written in 1814, makes it clear that scandal about Napoleon and Duroc was not only spread by people like Goldsmith.

The nature and gradations of homosexuality had not been exhaustively explored in the 1920s, when Dr Praetorius wrote his article;[5] so we might perhaps expect him to be more interested in the possibility that Napoleon's affection for young Las Cases was homosexually inspired. He wastes few words in dismissing that suggestion. When Emmanuel de Las Cases went with his father to share Napoleon's exile in St Helena he was about fifteen, if we accept Masson's version, and about seventeen when he left the island. Dr Praetorius gives the boy's age as eighteen; but Captain Maitland, who saw a lot of him aboard *Bellerophon*, thought that he was thirteen so he may have looked younger than his real age. Naturally the boy was infected by his father's worship of Napoleon, which amounted to idolatry. Some years after Napoleon's death he assaulted Sir Hudson Lowe in a London street, and tried to provoke him into fighting a duel. Finally he was one of the party which returned to St Helena to take Napoleon's body to Paris for re-burial in the Invalides.

I think that Dr Praetorius was quite right to dismiss as unsubstantiated innuendo the insinuations that Napoleon's more or less paternal feelings for this boy were homosexually inclined.

It is surprising however, that Dr Praetorius, whilst writing about St Helena, did not refer to the Gourgaud affair, about which the evidence is much more suggestive. His omission to do so can probably be accounted for by his assumption that Napoleon, if homosexual, would have been interested only in good-looking youths.

Napoleon's nature, and the circumstances of his life, prevented him from being very companionable; and there was probably only one man who must have resented being left out of the list of those whom he loved. This was Baron Gaspard Gourgaud, a vain touchy general fourteen years younger than Napoleon, who in the course of quite a distinguished military career, became one of Napoleon's orderly officers in April 1811. A year later he was made First Orderly Officer, a newly created post which brought him into a

most intimate relationship with Napoleon which endured nearly six years.

He claimed to have saved Napoleon's life in 1814, and the story as he loved to tell it went thus: 'At Brienne I killed a Cossack who hurled himself at His Majesty, in an attempt to run him through with a lance'. Napoleon could always madden Gourgaud by pretending to remember nothing of this incident, which it is quite possible he really had not noticed.

Gourgaud's name was not among those originally selected to accompany Napoleon to St Helena, but he insisted on going, and it is well that he did so, for Lord Rosebery considered that Gourgaud's St Helena Journal is the richest source of information for historians of that period of Napoleon's life. This was before the discovery of the *Cahiers de Sainte Hélène* of Bertrand, to whom alone Lord Rosebery awarded 'The halo of fidelity', praising him for 'one agreeable singularity; he published no book, which is in itself a pleasant contrast to the copious self-revelation of Gourgaud and Las Cases'.

Lord Rosebery wrote that Gourgaud was devoted to his master, with an 'unreasonable petulant jealousy which made his devotion intolerable'; and he added that 'the Napoleon of our preconceptions' would have ordered a subordinate who talked to him as Gourgaud did out of the room before he had finished a single sentence. But Napoleon was always strangely disturbed by Gourgaud, and irritated by his absurd jealousy. He really hated to hurt his feelings, and when he did so and Gourgaud was sulking he went to great lengths to effect a reconciliation – pinching, caressing and coaxing him, to use Gourgaud's own expressions, and calling him 'My son Gourgaud, Gorgo, Gorgotto, My little Gourgaud'. He said of Gourgaud: 'He was my First Orderly Officer. He is my work. He is my son'. He recognised that Gourgaud had an intense mother-fixation, but hurt his feelings by impatiently telling him that he was mad to rave about his mother in such an unreasonable way.

After Gourgaud left the island Napoleon said: 'He loved me as a lover loves his mistress. He was impossible.' Count Balmain, the Russian Commissioner in St Helena, said that Gourgaud was 'jealous of Napoleon as of a mistress'. Hilaire Belloc, in his preface to the English translation of Gourgaud's Journal, wrote: 'Gourgaud's attitude towards the Emperor was more than admiration and adoration, it was exalted personal love, filled with the highest degree of admiration.'*

* *The St Helena Journal of General Baron Gourgaud*, John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1932.

Maximilien Vox concludes that beneath Gourgaud's virile exterior lay a scarcely repressed hyper-feminine sensitivity, and 'his adoration of the Emperor was nothing but a repressed amorous passion'. As for Napoleon's attitude Vox believes that the boredom of St Helena revived Napoleon's old curiosity about suffering; and perceiving the nature of Gourgaud's affections, he could not resist treating him in a sadistic way, but 'let himself be caught in his own game, moreover, and ended up in a sort of unhealthy state of excitement looking for sentimental quarrels'.

Vox finds that Gourgaud's accounts of these scenes are made piquant by the evident pleasure which he took in speaking whenever possible of the Emperor in the feminine, carrying all the permutations of *sa majesté* to absurd lengths. The literal translation of one passage quoted by Vox is as follows:

> Her Majesty dines at home. She received the governor without being dressed, and swore to him that She would have been better treated had She surrendered to either Russia or Austria .... Her Majesty grew angry, declared herself the mistress of her money. Yes, Your Majesty is the mistress!

Lord Rosebery, commenting on the 'strange and hopeless contradictions' in the contemporary accounts, wrote: 'There seems to have been something in the air of St Helena which blighted exact truth.' One fact however is unquestioned. Gourgaud was insanely jealous of anyone who came between him and Napoleon, or even diverted the Emperor from fighting over again his old battles. After the departure of Las Cases Gourgaud's hatred was concentrated upon the Montholons, and he warned the Emperor against them. Napoleon teasingly asked him what business it would be of Gourgaud's if he chose to go to bed with Madame de Montholon, to which Gourgaud replied that he had never suspected the Emperor of having so depraved a taste. He threatened to challenge de Montholon to a duel; which greatly angered Napoleon, who said that although Gourgaud was brave in battle he could not stand the strain of St Helena, and lost his mental balance. Others suggested that enforced chastity was at the root of the trouble, and Montholon, to Gourgaud's fury, urged him to pay court to various local ladies.

The cause of Gourgaud's return to Europe has long been one of history's minor enigmas. He certainly became unbearably bored with conditions in St Helena, where he quarrelled with almost

everyone. He longed to go home to see his mother as he was morbidly obsessed by the fear that she might die before he could see her again. One theory is that the quarrel which was the ostensible cause of his leaving Longwood was a feigned one designed to make it possible for him to return to Europe where he could carry out some sort of intrigue on Napoleon's behalf.

Exhaustive research by Frédéric Masson led him to doubt the existence of any such mission. Gourgaud was allowed to take the direct route to Europe, avoiding the long delay at the Cape which had been imposed upon Las Cases, and the confidence with which the Governor permitted this was justified. Gourgaud's statements in England tended to minimise Napoleon's sufferings, and supported the Governor's suspicions that he still nurtured hopes of escape. During the month which elapsed between Gourgaud's departure from Longwood and his embarkation he was frequently questioned by the Governor and the Commissioners of the Allied Powers, all eager to find out what went on behind Napoleon's closed doors.

The Marquis de Montchenu[6] shrewdly discerned that it would take little to make the impetuous disturbed man lose all sense of what it was decent to say and not to say. Tortured by his conscience for having abandoned the master he idolised, to whom he had consecrated his whole existence, as he said in his letter of farewell, he did indeed seem to lose all sense of propriety. As Ralph Korngold put it, when 'Gourgaud's pathological love for Napoleon turned to hatred . . . he made revelations which no honourable man would have made.'* As if to make Count Balmain believe that he really had turned against the Emperor he told him that, when Napoleon had said that if he ever got to Europe Gourgaud must join him, he had replied that he would meet him with a double-barrelled gun.

To account for his leaving the Emperor he told the Governor: 'I can no longer live there with honour. I have been treated like a dog. He wished me to do things contrary to my honour, or force me by bad treatment to leave him'. Next day he wrote that like many others in St Helena, he had been troubled by dysentery, to which had recently been added 'afflictions of a moral nature'.

After leaving Longwood he wrote in his Journal that the Marquis of Montchenu had congratulated him on having broken his fetters; and he added – 'Alas! I have only broken my moral

* *Last Years of Napoleon*, Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1960

fetters – they weighed most heavily on me.' He even went so far as to threaten blackmail:

> You might remind Bertrand that I am in a position to play the Emperor a scurvy trick if I were so inclined, that I could reveal a good many secrets. My Longwood diary would be worth fifteen thousand pounds in London, and he had better not go too far.

Napoleon dismissed this remarkable threat with these equally remarkable words:

> Speak to me no more of that man; he is mad. He was jealous, in love with me. *Que diable*, I am not his wife and can't sleep with him. I know he will write these things against me but I don't care. If he is received in France he will be shut up, hanged or shot.[7]

Whilst Napoleon thus seemed to be serenely aloof and untroubled by the threatened revelations others at Longwood were worried on his behalf, and their own, about the lengths to which Gourgaud's garrulous mischief-making might go. Dr O'Meara, already quarrelling with the Governor, had not long to wait, and was soon himself expelled from Longwood. Montholon knew that he and his wife would not be spared the frustrated bachelor's venom. But it was Bertrand, Grand Marshal of the Palace, who knew just what to expect. He did not live in Longwood and was able to steer clear of most of the petty squabbles brewed in that overcrowded house. He had patiently tried to keep the peace, and had prevented Gourgaud fighting his duel with Montholon. He had begged Gourgaud to have patience; and, speaking from personal experience, told him that they all knew what the Emperor was like. Gourgaud only needed to be patient, to make himself useful and pleasant to the Emperor, and his turn to be in favour would come again.

After one of these talks Gourgaud wrote in his Journal (as quoted by de Langle in his edition of Bertrand's diary):

> I open my heart to Bertrand. Bertrand repeats that I have only to please, that it depends on me. Have I a c . . . . to please?

Dr Ganière writes that this remark – '*Ai-je un c . . . à plaire*' was coarsely hurled at Bertrand, and he comments: '*Jusqu'alor il s'était contenté de dire "un jupon".*'

When a final rupture had become inevitable Bertrand urged Gourgaud to make reasons of health the excuse for his departure; but Gourgaud would have none of this, and retorted that if he had to write to the Emperor it would be to say that he could not be 'at the orders of his c . . .' (*aux ordres de sa c . . .*) He said that the Emperor wanted to make it appear that Gourgaud was abandoning him, whereas in fact he was being chased away. Those who are not acquainted with French obscenities must accept the assurance of those who are that these strange utterances reinforce our suspicions of an unnatural relationship. They are, at least, extremely odd things to have been said by 'Gorgotto' about his hero.

All the perverted passion may have been on Gourgaud's part, though Vox and others have clearly doubted this. It is certainly hard to believe that even in the morbid atmosphere of that pathetic tawdry little Court at Longwood a general could have conducted himself thus toward his former Emperor and Commander-in-Chief without some sort of encouragement. Surely it is more than a little odd that a middle-aged man could formulate thoughts which could be expressed in terms such as those that were used by Napoleon in talking about Gourgaud – or indeed to Gourgaud.

For example, one little attack of jealousy after the departure of Las Cases was smoothed over by Napoleon who explained to Gourgaud: 'You possess the rough virtues, whereas Las Cases has the disposition of a woman. You were jealous of him'. These two spoke of one another, and conversed together, in a manner which at least recognised the possibility of homosexual attachment between them. Gourgaud's behaviour may have been influenced by the devastating boredom of St Helena of which he never ceased complaining. Napoleon, who had written of dying of boredom in Elba, must have suffered from even more powerful emotions in St Helena.

We should forebear to judge him when we remember the terrible pathos of his outburst to Gourgaud: 'Do you think that when I lie awake at night I haven't my bad moments, when I think of what I was and what I am now?'

Poor lonely Napoleon, surrounded by nonentities, separated from every member of his family, embittered by hatred of the Governor, the representative of the English oligarchy who, in his

eyes, had betrayed the sacred laws of hospitality by treating him as a prisoner; sick, in pain and doomed to die before very long – is it any wonder that he looked for comfort and friendship wherever he could find it? He knew how self-interested most of his entourage really were. Las Cases, a late recruit, and a figure of fun to the others, in the naval uniform to which his claim was slender, was a sycophantically devoted slave who left as soon as he had collected material for eight volumes of memoirs, useful but rather heavy going.

De Montholon, who was also gestating a long dull book, has even been suspected of killing Napoleon with arsenic. He longed to go home, especially after his wife and family had left, but by the end he had somehow acquired the first place in Napoleon's confidence, previously occupied by Bertrand.[8] Could Napoleon have suspected that Bertrand was sadly disillusioned and was keeping a cruelly outspoken diary? Just how cruel it was the world was not to know until it was discovered in 1946 and painstakingly deciphered by Monsieur Paul Fleuriot de Langle. The sad truth is that they were all intolerably bored with St Helena and with Napoleon, during whose lifetime they were condemned to stay there. But Gourgaud wanted no money. He wrestled with his conscience before he would even accept a small pension for his mother. He craved only the affection and esteem of his capricious idol.

The possibility of a homosexual relationship attracted less attention, somewhat naturally perhaps in the nineteenth century, than the gossip which hinted that Napoleon's life had been as cheerfully heterosexual as the world believed it had always been. If Mr Cronin* inclines to this view it is not on account of the gossip from which he very properly remains as aloof as did Lord Rosebery. But, from the diaries of Gourgaud and Verling, he deduces that Napoleon's 'behaviour, attitudes and conversation were, from a sexual point of view, just what one would expect from a normal healthy soldier.'

Of course Verling never spoke to Napoleon, and he said little in his diary about Gourgaud, except that Madame Bertrand had told him that her husband had not wanted Gourgaud to come to St Helena; and that Marshal Soult could not bear to see him in the Emperor's antechamber, as he considered him to be 'a man of no stability of character.'

Deductions are a matter of opinion, but it is a matter of fact,

* *Napoleon*, William Collins 1971.

with which any psychiatrist would agree, that the 'behaviour, attitudes and conversation' of many homosexual men appear robustly heterosexual. They may affect large moustaches, big pipes and hairy tweeds, make a show of shunning homosexual males and enjoying the society of women. It is all a matter of the psychological process of over-compensation. (One might suspect that many members of teenage 'queer-bashing' gangs are over-reacting to unconfessed fears, and doubts of their own orientation.)

I have already indicated why I am as little impressed by Napoleon's boasting of his successes with women as was his close friend Caulaincourt, who considered that one might imagine Napoleon only engaged in amorous pursuits for the sake of talking about them. That sort of talk is more likely to indicate weak sexuality than the reverse. Despite Napoleon's evident pleasure in the society of Mesdames Bertrand and Montholon (when he was not being abominably rude to them) I feel that it was the homosexual component of this bisexual individual's exceptionally complex personality which flourished in St Helena, where he was more in the society of men than of women, as indeed he was throughout his life.

Although the English had refused to allow Napoleon to take to St Helena a handsome sixteen year old page, Sainte Catherine d'Audiffredi[9], young Las Cases was not the only attractive youth in Longwood House. Napoleon was still surrounded by handsome young men in their twenties to be slapped and to have their ears pulled. Even Count Montholon was 'effeminate in appearance', according to Claude Manceron, who describes Gourgaud as 'a child of thirty . . . a handsome boy, and all too well aware of it', and possessing 'a little too much fat about the buttocks'.

British naval officers had noticed that Napoleon's manner was cold and formal to his staff – Admiral Cockburn called it 'most overbearing, if not absolutely rude' – in sharp contrast to his familiarity with his servants. These included the valets, young St Denis, known as Ali for reasons which are explained later, and Marchand, whom Napoleon used to call 'Mamzelle Marchand' when he was in a good temper, so Ali tells us. Noverraz, a burly Swiss groom, may have earned his place by his courage during one of the early attempts on Napoleon's life.

Of the Corsicans, one, Cipriani Franceschi the major domo, was to die in St Helena, whilst Santini, 'the keeper of the portfolio', lived to become one of the guardians of the Emperor's last resting

place in the Invalides. Gentilini, a footman from Elba, was exceptionally handsome and quite a lady's man. Marchand said that Napoleon was especially fond of Ali, and did not want him to marry, which however he managed to organise for himself without Napoleon's interference. Suspecting perhaps that a man is not always a hero to his valet, Napoleon asked Ali not to publish his journal and Ali said he had destroyed it. He remembered enough to publish a book; not a very interesting one, but Napoleon need not have worried. He is the hero.

Perhaps we can invoke some sort of St Helena madness to explain Napoleon's curious attitude to Gourgaud, and the odd words he used about him; but Napoleon, at the height of his great powers and at a time which he used to call the happiest time of his life, had said things almost as strange about another man – a brother Emperor, Tsar Alexander I of Russia.

He wrote to Josephine from Erfurt: 'I am pleased with Alexander, he ought to be with me. If he were a woman I think I should make him my sweetheart'; (*je crois que j'en ferais mon amoureuse*). When the two emperors first met, for their long intimate conversation alone on a raft anchored in midstream in the river Niemen, it seemed to be a meeting of twin souls. Struck by the beauty of the young Tsar, Napoleon cried: 'It is Apollo!'

Alexander was tall and handsome with golden curls and blue eyes – 'a little ripe, a little effeminate', comments Claude Manceron. He was not only endowed with good looks but with great charm, and, although he has been described as having a rather effeminate manner, he got on well with women, including the beautiful Queen of Prussia. But at Tilsit the queen, determined to use all her charm for the benefit of Prussia, never had a chance when the two infatuated emperors were together. As Maximilien Vox puts it, 'the third coquette, Louise of Prussia, found herself between two suitors who had eyes only for each other'.[10]

The actor Talma loved to tell of the stagecraft by which Napoleon used to emphasise the familiarity between these two rulers of great nations – the two large armchairs for them, flanked by a row of lesser seats for the kings and princes of the Confederation. Napoleon always played the host. Everyone dined with him; and to the other sovereigns he made rich presents of jewellery and expensive objects, no doubt plundered from conquered countries in the first place.

Napoleon's private secretary de Méneval and Constant the valet, from their respective vantage-points, watched the growth of a

remarkable friendship, and later wrote about it. As Constant put it, 'His Majesty and the young Tsar became mutually attached to each other at first sight. The two sovereigns seemed sincerely attached to each other and on most intimate terms.' De Méneval wrote of the 'charming familiarity' and 'affectionate intimacy' which quickly sprang up between them, and he believed that 'Napoleon truly loved the Emperor Alexander, and was charmed by his wit, grace, and affability'. However, with the wisdom of hindsight, he concluded that, despite 'the most caressing demonstrations' Alexander was not sincere.

This opinion was not shared by either of the emperors. When the brief honeymoon was over, and they were once again enemies, Alexander was to say: 'How I loved that man', and Napoleon also claimed that the affection between them had been sincere, adding, 'He pleased me, and I loved him.' Las Cases, who reported that remark in St Helena, wrote as follows about the second meeting between the two at Erfurt in 1808:

> The two emperors gave one another the greatest marks of affection. They passed many hours together in the charm of a perfect intimacy, and the most familiar relations of private life. 'We were two young boon companions,' said the Emperor, 'whose mutual pleasures could have no secrets from one another.' '*deux jeuns gens de bonne compagnie.*' (Napoleon was thirty-eight, and Alexander eight years younger.)

When the two emperors met at Erfurt their affectionate embraces went so far beyond the perfunctory ceremonial little hugs usually associated with such occasions, that the onlookers were astounded by their warm and loving nature. During a play, when an actor declaimed 'The friendship of a great man is a blessing of the Gods', Alexander rose suddenly, and kissed Napoleon.

When Napoleon and Alexander went for a ride with the King of Prussia, Napoleon found the king very much in the way, and at the end of the ride 'the two emperors dismounted in an instant and took each other by the hand to go upstairs together'. Quite an Egyptian scene. The emperors were always glad to get rid of the king, and to spend long hours until well beyond midnight in intimate conversation.

It may have been for political reasons that Napoleon set himself to charm the strange impressionable young Tsar, and he was never

above that sort of thing when it suited his purposes. But he was always eager for true personal friendship with a genuine hereditary monarch, and was probably delighted to find that he could establish such a friendship on terms of a mutual tendency to romantic fantasy. He did however admit that he had never fully understood the Tsar's mind – there was a piece missing, was how he put it. It was perhaps the difference between Corsican and Russian fantasy.

On the other hand, the astute Napoleon may have discerned the fact that Alexander was mentally unstable, a case of schizophrenia in all probability. With his marked emotional instability the Tsar had little difficulty in persuading himself that his frequent changes of policy sprang from genuine conviction, though much soul-searching was involved in the process. He was often in the grip of a profound Russian melancholy, which at times amounted to mental illness, and finally progressed to 'depressive mania'. Many believed that his death was faked in order to allow him to go and live a secret life as a hermit.

The victim of a state marriage at the age of 15, in his relations with women Alexander was always seeking for a 'soul-mate'. He found one eventually in the astonishing Lithuanian mystic Madame de Kruedener, who specialised in strange prayer meetings, and liked to try to establish some sort of mystic power over political figures, for the good of the World as she saw it. European politics in 1814-1815 were complicated by the conflict in Alexander between designs on Poland, natural in a Russian ruler, and his vague religious mysticism, encouraged by this absurd woman, which led to his hopes of forming a 'Sacred League' or 'Holy Alliance' of rulers who would unite Europe and ensure lasting peace – much the sort of dream in which Napoleon sometimes indulged.

It is by no means inconceivable that homosexual attraction played a part in the politically important friendship between Napoleon and Alexander. Albert Vandal, writing in 1893, clearly thought that it did. Napoleon, he wrote, saw that the handsome young Tsar had a tender, affectionate and sensitive nature; responsive to friendship but giving and demanding a lot of it. Napoleon played upon this to make, not so much an alliance as a deep, intimate personal liaison, founded on attachment of man to man, in which Vandal saw something undefined but mysterious.

Vandal believed too that Alexander on his side was determined too woo Napoleon. Although he spoke French fluently, '*dans sa*

bouche le francais se modulait à la russe, avec des inflexions caressantes, avec un douceur presque feminine' – 'almost feminine sweetness'. I will not attempt a translation of the whole sentence, which calls to mind the seductiveness of the deliciously broken English of many a foreign actress. Alexander, like Napoleon, was certainly not averse to a bit of seduction if it suited his political ends. From Vandal again we learn that the Tsar exerted himself to charm and enslave Napoleon's ambassador, Caulaincourt. Caulaincourt himself amply confirmed this. At one of their earliest meetings the Tsar deigned to embrace him, as he put it; and Vandal believed that Caulaincourt's delicate and sensitive spirit was bowled over by the Tsar's tender concern for him and for his happiness, no less than for that of Napoleon, to whom Caulaincourt was strongly attached.

Alexander frequently questioned Caulaincourt about Napoleon's private life, suspecting that Napoleon had not really laid bare the most intimate secrets of his heart, as he himself had been ready to do. When the first overtures for a Russian bride for Napoleon were begun they came as a complete surprise to Alexander. He told Caulaincourt that he thought that Napoleon needed relaxation in love, because he had too strong a head to be very sentimental. He said: 'I pity him if he does not love anyone.' He himself, he said, longed at times not to be a monarch so as to be sure that 'one is loved for oneself.'

Napoleon, who knew something of Alexander's powers of seduction, once accused Caulaincourt of being pro-Russian, because of his affection for Alexander. Caulaincourt refused to admit this and vowed that he had thought only of France's interests. His biographer in *Biographie Michaud* supports this claim to have kept his head, diplomatically as it were, adding that he was never captivated by the seductive, dangerous caresses of Alexander. Napoleon was a less impressionable and sensitive man than Caulaincourt seems to have been, but as a fellow-Emperor he was in a position to return the Tsar's affection, and his 'seductive, dangerous caresses', which he certainly did. As in the notorious Gourgaud affair, these two spoke of one another in a remarkable manner. Napoleon could speak of loving Alexander as his mistress; Alexander said the same about Wellington, of all men! Surely a rather odd pair of emperors.

Following the trail blazed by Dr Praetorius, the first psychologist to make a detailed study of Napoleon's homosexuality, has led me to examine three isolated friendships. I must now take a

closer look at Napoleon's boyhood, starting where this chapter logically should have done, from what was said in Chapter 3 of his family background.

Napoleon, writing about his time at a girls' school in Corsica, said: 'Being a pretty boy, and being the only one there, I was caressed by every one of my fair companions'. He seems to have shown a preference for one of them, because the others used to chant:

Napoleone di mezza calzetta Napoleon with stockings at half mast
Fa l'amore a Giacominetta. Makes love to Giacominetta.

To have been the only boy at a girls' school was not the best preparation for life at a military academy, and this must have intensified Napoleon's sullen isolation from his comrades. De Bourrienne said that he always withdrew to the library during play hours. On the only occasion when we hear of him joining in the games it was to organise a snowball fight on strictly military lines. It had to be stopped when too much gravel was being added to the snowballs. We are not told who was responsible for this unethical conduct, but we may guess that the fierce little Corsican was not more sinned against than sinning.

The loneliness and unhappiness of his schooldays, and the trouble and bullying to which his aggressively Corsican, anti-French spirit exposed him, have been stressed by many writers, but it is worth mentioning that the common assumption that his schooldays were unhappy is not based upon anything he said himself. Not one word of Napoleon's indicated that his experience at school were traumatic – for him. He had an occasional beating, as most boys did until comparatively recently, but the trauma often fell upon other boys and the staff. He was a generous patron and benefactor to his former schoolfriends and teachers; and would today have been a proud wearer of the old school tie, a loyal 'Old Briennian', which in itself smacks of the juvenile. De Bourrienne, whose memoirs are suspect, and unacceptable to many Bonapartists, was the most articulate of Napoleon's schoolfriends, but he was not the first to write about those early days.

Pride of place belongs to an Englishman, or possibly a Scotsman, who was the boy-librarian at Brienne and consequently saw a lot of young Buonaparte. His account of Napoleon at Brienne, published in 1797 in London, under the name 'Mr C.H.', was followed in 1802 by an anonymous pamphlet published in Leipsic, the author of which claimed to have been with Napoleon

both at Brienne and the Royal Military School in Paris.[11]

Both these accounts are written in admiring tones and tell the well-worn anecdotes which crop up in all subsequent books, though without the customary claims to have discerned in the boy signs of what the man was to become. The most valuable insight into the hero's character which 'Mr C.H.' gives us lies in his explanation of the boy's bizarre conduct in an incident described in many books. During a fireworks display in celebration of the birthday of Louis XVI an explosion started a dangerous fire next to Napoleon's garden. When some cadets broke through the hedge to escape the flames he attacked them ferociously with a pickaxe, driving them back into the fire. 'Mr C.H.' does not minimise the ferocity – indeed he says that Napoleon 'increased the number of the wounded' – but we learn what lay beneath it.

Napoleon had forced his two partners in this garden to give it up entirely to him; had spent all his money on it, fencing it off and, in two years, had made it 'a retreat worthy of a hermit'. His hedge was in fact concrete re-inforcement of the abstract hedge which the rather lonely and morose little boy erected round himself. Perhaps he was not quite so lonely as is usually supposed. Alexandre Assier in 1874 painted quite a pleasing picture of the small Brienne cadet, but struck the first note of slight hostility to de Bourrienne.

The most recent detailed study of Napoleon's youth is that of Dr Paul Bartel in *La Jeunesse inédit de Napoléon*, who draws, among many sources, upon the three stodgy volumes of A. Chuquet, Frédèric Masson's books and the recently discovered *Cahiers de souvenir* of Alexandre des Mazis, a close friend of Napoleon at the Military School in Paris and later in his first regiment. Dr Bartel tells all – the history of the military schools, their curricula, even their clothes-lists – a jarring note to suffering parents today. Napoleon's principal school-friends, according to Dr Bartel, were Charles Le Lieur de Ville-sur-Arce at Brienne, Alexandre des Mazis at the Military School in Paris, both of whom were a year older than Napoleon; and Laugier de Bellecour, a year younger, who was both at Brienne and Paris. Dr Bartel has little to say about Fauvelet de Bourrienne who was 'certainly the best known of his comrades' at Brienne, according to Masson; and de Bourrienne himself had even less to say about these other friends. He mentions Laugier de Bellecour only in a list of the cadets who went on with Napoleon to Paris, which was the point at which de Bourrienne's own close association with Napoleon was broken off

for some thirteen years, until he became his private secretary in 1797.

Charles Le Lieur, a relative of Marshal Marmont, sounds a kindly extroverted kind of boy, who claimed to have discerned the tenderness and sensitivity beneath Napoleon's forbidding exterior. The friendship persisted and Charles later hoped to gain from it some encouragement and recognition of his talents, which do not appear to have been great. He claimed to have befriended the young Napoleon and, when his sister rebuked him for *tutoyant* the First Consul, he replied: '*Mais n'étais-je pas son ancien*?'

When they left Brienne he commended his friend to the care of Alexandre des Mazis, as he himself was going to another school, in Metz. Napoleon rejected des Mazis, until, after a quarrel with an older boy called Champeaux, appointed to be the younger cadet's instructor in musketry, Alexandre was given the task. After this their friendship became very close and was further cemented when they joined the same regiment.

Des Mazis (his name appears as Desmazis or Demazis in some books) was always falling in love and Napoleon would pompously recall him to a sense of duty, and treat him to diatribes against love and women on the lines which I have already quoted. This led Alexandre to express the opinion that Buonaparte's habitual way of life was of a purity which was extremely rare in a young man, and that he could not conceive of him ever being dominated by a woman. He always shunned anything of doubtful morality – '*Je l'ai toujours vu fuir ce qui était contraire aux bonnes moeurs*'. In one curious incident which Alexandre described, a young woman was brought to Napoleon dressed as a man. Napoleon refused to embrace her and saw through the ruse. Just what may have been the object of such transvestist tricks we can only guess. The sex life of young Buonaparte may have been an object of speculation among his comrades. When des Mazis was in the sick-bay Napoleon confined himself to his room for three days, refusing to leave it even to attend to the calls of nature, but, 'according to the custom of his island', pouring his *immondices* out of the window.

Napoleon and des Mazis left Paris to join their regiment on the same day, and continued to live 'less as friends than as brothers'. Oscar Browning's statement that in Paris they shared a room is thought by Dr Bartel to be inaccurate, because of the care taken to prevent homosexual practices, which were known to be prevalent in French military schools at that time. Everyone knew about the 'nymphs' at Brienne; 'les indecents' as they were called

at Tournon. It was on the tip of this iceberg that Napoleon's friendship with the third special friend was to founder. Laugier de Bellecour soon became a nymph. He was a warm and companionable boy for whom Napoleon felt considerable affection; but when he realised how the land lay he warned Laugier against his evil associates, with success he thought. But Laugier did not want to reform, and eventually got drawn into homosexual circles in Paris.

When Napoleon found that Laugier had relapsed, and finally renounced their friendship, Laugier showed an unpleasant side to his nature, trying to set his friends against Napoleon and finally being so unwise as to jostle Buonaparte from behind, for which he was roughly handled, fell against a stove and got badly hurt. Investigation of this incident was halted by Napoleon's cold statement that he had been insulted and had revenged himself.[1 2] De Bellecour emigrated in 1791, and it is not known if he ever returned to France. Des Mazis, who also emigrated after the Revolution, did return to France after a spell in the Portuguese army, and was welcomed and befriended by Napoleon in exceptionally generous style.

William Hazlitt, who admired Napoleon and wrote a biography of him only seven years after his death, thought that at school 'the want of proper exercise together with the not giving way to the gaiety and flow of animal spirits natural at his time of life, probably stunted his growth.' We may not agree with this but it is a refreshingly English viewpoint to wonder if a good game of football might not have made a better man of him. 'Give them lots of exercise' was for long the traditional prescription of schoolmasters for the prevention or suppression of manifestations of the normal homosexual phase in boys.

Merezhkovsky believed that Napoleon's 'unsociableness was his safeguard' from these temptations; but it seems evident from Dr Bartel's more penetrating analysis that young Buonaparte faced up to the problem and rejected any kind of physical expression of adolescent homosexuality. Indeed it would be surprising to learn that he had become involved in the prevalent homosexual behaviour. Most of his biographers stress his sullen isolation at school and his contempt for his comrades; and there is some evidence that in early life he disliked being touched. His school-fellows were well aware of his feelings about them and actually subjected him to a cadets' court-martial, which decided that Napoleon was unfit to be a cadet captain or to lead his comrades because he despised them and disdained their affection.

As a mature man Napoleon plainly understood about the homosexual phase in a boy's life, but it seems likely that any such feelings of which he may have been aware would have disturbed him, and that they were repressed and sublimated in his intense application to study. His homosexuality was probably latent, as it is in so many boys and young men, and his denunciations of the homosexual conduct of others could have stemmed from the frustration of repressing similar tendencies in himself.

A close friend of Napoleon's youth, when he was a lieutenant was Joseph Ceracchi, a Corsican sculptor who had lived in Rome since his childhood. He was about nine years older than Napoleon, and their friendship is described by Hilaire Belloc as follows:

> These two were bound by a certain friendship, certainly by intimacy; they called each other by the 'tu' which is as though in English one used the Christian name. He was an artist with much of the virtue, all the vices, which attach to men of his kind.*

Later, when Napoleon was a general, Ceracchi tried to renew the old companionship, and he did so again later with the First Consul in Paris. But Napoleon was irritated by the 'deliberate carelessness and public intimacy' of his approach, *tutoyant* and all, and repelled his friendship, though in St Helena he claimed that it was Ceracchi who had turned against him because he had become a tyrant. Ceracchi was executed in 1802, having been involved in one of the plots against Napoleon's life – not a very well organised one, for Count Réal, the Prefect of Police, described it as 'a thoroughly French secret, for the whole of Paris was in the know.'

Hilaire Belloc seems to have been hinting that the relationship of Napoleon with Ceracchi was a homosexual one. His friendship with Duroc was quite possibly, and that with Gourgaud undeniably of that nature. As for Alexander I, the suggestion may seem bizarre, but is not entirely groundless.

From his schooldays until his marriage Napoleon lived in almost exclusively male society, and all his life, not only when he was in the field with his soldiers, he surrounded himself with handsome young men, as aides-de-camp, valets, pages and so on. Now there need be nothing remarkable about that, any more than there is about the employment in all armies of young soldiers as 'batmen' or officers' orderlies. Field Marshal Montgomery exerted his

* *Napoleon.* Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1932.

personal influence upon his battles by living at his tactical headquarters, far from his senior staff officers who did the spade-work, and surrounded by young liaison-officers – his 'eyes and ears', who roamed the battlefield in their jeeps, just as did Wellington's or Napoleon's aides-de-camp on their horses. This is how many young officers have learned their profession, and so it was with Napoleon's aides, many of them not much younger than Napoleon himself. 'Monty's L.Os' learned a lot about the personalities of the generals to whom they conveyed their chief's intentions, or from whom they learned what he wanted to know. But they did not expect to be suddenly promoted to take those generals' places. This, as we have seen, happened to Duroc, and he was not the only one. Caulaincourt's advancement was principally in the field of diplomacy but he was a general of division at the age of thirty-two.

Even more remarkable was the case of another young aide-de-camp, Anne Jean Marie René Savary, later Duke of Rovigo, who was five years younger than Napoleon. His memoirs begin with the sentence: 'I have been accused of being fanatically devoted to the Emperor, and of being so still.' The truth of the 'accusation' is fully borne out by the memoirs and by history.

Savary was chiefly employed in doing Napoleon's 'dirty work'. He was the kind of unprincipled ruffian which dictators find essential. It was he who 'liquidated' conspirators like Pichegru and Cadoudal, and the unlucky English sailor, Captain Wright, who used to land such conspirators in France, and had the misfortune to be ship-wrecked and captured. The Duke of Enghien was another of the Usurper's victims disposed of by Savary. When Marshal Lannes fell sick Savary was given command of his Vth Corps, at the age of thirty-two, to the intense annoyance of Suchet, who, though only four years older than Savary, was very much senior to him in the army.

It is hard to believe that there was no gossip about the favouritism and inordinately rapid promotion which the Emperor bestowed upon one effeminate young man, the Chevalier de Sainte Croix, who became his protegé. Constant wrote this about him:

> This tale about Monsieur de Sainte Croix reminds me how fond the Emperor was of him. In the Army his advancement was both brilliant and rapid, for enlisting at the age of twenty-two he was already a general of division when he was killed in Spain. I often saw him at the Emperor's head-

> quarters; a slightly built, dapper little fellow, with a pretty smooth face more like a girl's than that of a brave soldier which he certainly was. His features were so delicate, his cheeks so pink, his fair hair so curly, that when the Emperor was in a good humour he always called him 'Miss Sainte Croix'.

Sainte Croix made a bad start with the Emperor, one of whose cousins he had fatally wounded in a duel. Baron Marbot explained that this was not the only cause of the Emperor's initial dislike of this young officer:

> The Emperor had another reason for this unfriendly welcome. Although of short stature himself, Napoleon had a great preference for tall, strong, masculine men; but Sainte Croix was small, slight and with the face of a pretty fair-complexioned woman.

But Marbot, a far better judge of military matters than Constant, was lavish in his praise of the soldierly qualities and military efficiency of Sainte Croix, which he says soon won the Emperor's esteem so that a close friendship rapidly matured. He soon became a colonel and after the battle of Aspern-Essling used to report to the Emperor every morning, when 'the aides-de-camp had orders to bring him at once to the Emperor's bedroom, and the Emperor, dressing in his presence would discuss the position of the two armies.'

This was the period when, after his defeat by Archduke Charles, Napoleon had withdrawn his army to the island of Lobau in the Danube. The outposts of the two armies were in full view of one another, and in order to make daylight reconnaissances Napoleon, dressed in a sergeant's overcoat, would go to the river accompanied by Sainte Croix who would strip and enter the water to give the impression of a harmless bathing party. Sainte Croix met his end in front of Wellington's Lines of Torres Vedras, where his head was taken off by a shot from a gunboat on the Tagus. His headless body galloped on for some distance.

Good looks were not always enough to secure Napoleon's favour. One of the most handsome of his aides-de-camp was Jacques Alexandre Bernard Law Lauriston. Bernard Law – Field Marshal Montgomery's Christian names, were not enough to make a marshal of Lauriston, until 1823, after Napoleon's death. Both

the Law and the Lauriston point to his Scottish descent. He was the son of a general who was descended from the Edinburgh family, the Laws of Lauriston. He was a year older than Napoleon whose friend he had been since schooldays in Paris. He became his aide-de-camp in 1800.

Napoleon habitually referred to him as *'mon bel aide-de-camp'*, perhaps a little sardonically, for Mademoiselle Avrillon, Josephine's lady's-maid, said that he never really like Lauriston. She could only suggest that the coldness between them was due to a *pressentiment*. Perhaps his Scots ancestry steeled him against the Corsican's caresses.

Napoleon embraced his soldiers at the slightest pretext, and when inspecting troops he had a habit of grasping a button on the tunic of the man to whom he was speaking. He frequently picked upon young boys for this sort of special attention. Passing down the ranks one day his attention became rivetted upon a sixteen-year-old peasant boy from Saxony, whose button he grasped during a conversation which seemed endless to the victim.[13]

Sometimes Napoleon grasped, not a button or an ear, but the soldier's nose, which may be quite significant. It is said that the nose has some special significance for homosexuals. The rubbing of noses is common in some races in which homosexual practices are not invested with the same social stigma or *tabu* as they are among Europeans. In an article entitled 'A Factual Study of Homosexuality' in the *British Medical Journal*, in 1958, the case is recorded of a known homosexual who was 'attracted by boys' noses; they were sexual objects and if he grasped a boy's nose he had an orgasm'. The German psychologists Krafft-Ebing, Hirschfeld, Bloch, and Stekel all recognised the nose as an occasional object of sexual attraction – a form of sexual symbolism or fetishism. But of course Napoleon's soldiers had not heard about all this. If it pleased the Little Corporal to hold on to their noses they were gratified to be noticed; and it cannot have been so painful as all that ear and hair pulling.

Napoleon's encounters with boy soldiers sometimes had rather ridiculous results, for he was known to give rapid promotion and even an immediate commission to some youth who had attracted his attention. Madame Junot told of a conversation between a drummer-boy of sixteen or seventeen and Napoleon, who promptly made him a subaltern in the Consular Guard. It is not recorded what his veterans thought about this, but one can imagine some pretty earthy comments in the ranks.

The Emperor could not be with his soldiers all the time. In his palaces he had his pages, valets, ushers, footmen and Mamelukes. Mademoiselle Avrillon, writing about Napoleon's 'predilection for handsome men', said that most of his pages had first been in the service of her mistress, Josephine. Napoleon, she explained, particularly liked good-looking youths, so when any of Josephine's pages attracted him by their faces or demeanour he would take them into his own service. She added that he hated to see men's faces when he came to Josephine's apartment.

Napoleon's pages normally joined his establishment at the age of fourteen or sixteen, and were pages up to the age of eighteen. A very young exception was Louis Hutré, taken on as a page in Elba when he was 8. He later wrote that Napoleon 'used to pinch my cheek. He made faces at me and gave me sweets'. Napoleon was always attended by one or more pages, 'all very handsome boys, especially the older ones', according to a contemporary observer quoted by Baron Imbert de St Amand. As we have seen, he could not keep his hands off people and the pages shared the pinches and slaps. Sometimes they were far from friendly slaps; and one boy was so severely slapped, simply for bringing a letter containing bad news, that he had to be restrained by the others, and later by his father, from making a fuss about it.

The Emperor's patronage extended to many boys whom he did not take into his personal service. Inspecting the cadets of the Lycée Impérial in 1808 he was struck by the diminutive A. Chailly, aged eight, in his miniature uniform. Many of the other cadets had their hair pulled but young Chailly was gently drawn forward by the arm, pinched and given a *soufflet de caresse*. He plucked up courage to complain that his father only gave him three sous for pocket-money, and Napoleon, probably recalling his own letter to his father on the same subject, made the child a royal bursar and saw to it that he got proper pocket-money.[14]

Some of Napoleon's valets have already been mentioned. The best-known and, on the evidence of his memoirs the most intelligent, was Louis Constant Wairy, always known as Constant. He served Napoleon faithfully from 1800 to 1814. He was one of those who served a brief apprenticeship with Josephine, which in his case was only a few months. He described how, when he was twenty-one, the First Consul noticed him during dinner and, having stared at him for a long time and looked him over from head to foot, asked if he would like to accompany him on a campaign. Constant was always eager to justify his desertion of the

Emperor. Perhaps he had simply had enough. During his fifteen years he only had two holidays, each about a week, and the second of these was sick leave.

Constant's place was taken in June 1814 by Marchand – *Mamzelle Marchand* as Napoleon called him when in a good mood. He had been one of the twelve young men chosen as ushers in 1811, when he was nineteen. As Napoleon's famous Mameluke Roustam had deserted at the same time as Constant, the young Frenchman Étienne St Denis became the only Mameluke.

He had entered Napoleon's service in 1806 at the age of eighteen and had been appointed second Mameluke five years later. He had a lively sense of the rights of his position, and does not seem to have seen anything ridiculous in being re-named Ali and made to dress in Oriental clothes.

This rather absurd manifestation of Napoleon's love of Orientalism had at first an underlying political motive. The Mamelukes, who included a troop of Mameluke cavalry, were intended to be visible evidence that the Egyptian campaign had not been a complete failure. They can be compared to the Gurkha orderly officers added by Queen Victoria to the Buckingham Palace scene. But when the great queen inaugurated this pleasing custom she could really claim to be the Empress of India. Napoleon had abandoned his hopes of Eastern conquests, together with the remains of his unhappy army of Egypt.

To the French, Roustam became a romantically interesting figure after Napoleon's return to France. He was part of the exciting Egyptian influence which set its mark on so many facets of the cultural revival of the early days of the Consulate and Empire. Furniture and buildings were embellished with sphinxes; beautiful striped fabrics reflected the supposed influence of Egypt; and fashions included head-dresses *á la Mameluke*. A favourite colour was *peau de Mameluke* – like our former 'nigger-brown', now renamed 'good earth' in the interests of race relations. The Consulate also had its *terre d'Egypte*.

Roustam Raza was a young Georgian of good family who had been kidnapped and carried off to Cairo at the age of six or seven years. He joined Napoleon's entourage in Egypt as a handsome youth of seventeen, and thenceforward, until his desertion in 1814, was never far from his master's side. He was in attendance at every official occasion and slept outside Napoleon's bedroom door, thus being privy to most of his affairs. He said that he was pinched or handled in some way daily from the very start, and he

was sometimes seen in tears after a particularly vigorous ear-pulling. The soldiers in Egypt had misgivings about the precise duties of this youth. Georgians were very suspect in those days because they provided many prostitutes of both sexes.

Hector Fleischmann, in his book about Roustam, wrote that it was at this time that the French Royalists began to accuse the Usurper of sodomy, and they claimed that these allegations were confirmed by the soldiers of the Army of Egypt. The soldiers freely admitted that conditions in Egypt had led to the spread within the French Army of the unnatural practices of the country; and Napoleon had only himself to blame for his name being associated with such scandals. His attitude towards the victim of the Arabs, described in Note 4 Chapter 1, indicated a curious attitude to such conduct; and he was known to have said that sodomy was the vice of great men of old, and to have expressed the opinion that Julius Caesar was justified in engaging in homosexual practices, dressed as a woman at the court of the King of Bithynia – presumably in furtherance of his diplomatic mission. Napoleon always held that the end justified the means, but surely this was going a bit too far.

Little wonder then that the gossip grew and ran through the army of Egypt that their young general himself was addicted to 'Socratic habits', the polite expression which even private soldiers in those days used in their letters and memoirs. Presumably blunter words were used around the camp fires.

This scandal was avidly seized upon by the scurrilous English pamphleteer, Lewis Goldsmith, who wrote that Napoleon united two tastes rarely encountered in one man, being dissolute with women and addicted to a vice of which Socrates was falsely accused. He added: 'I should not wonder if he should, like his prototype Nero, marry a boy.'

Lest it be thought that I am a modern Lewis Goldsmith let me repeat that I do not believe that Napoleon resorted to such practices. However it certainly does appear that it was not only the physical and mental deterioration of the last few years of his life, or the dull and unnatural existence in St Helena, which brought out the latent homosexuality in his character. 'Mamzelle Marchand' had his predecessor in 'Mademoiselle Sainte Croix'; Gourgaud his in Duroc, and perhaps even in the Tsar.

Mr Cronin writes: 'Napoleon was never accused of homosexual relations, save perhaps in the English press. Indeed, he disliked homosexuality . . . '* It would be more accurate to say that it was

* *Napoleon:* William Collins 1971.

only by such writers as Goldsmith, or by French Royalists, that he was accused of sodomy – which is rather different. It must be clearly understood that many homosexual men engage in no sort of physical manifestations of their deviation, for which indeed they may feel revulsion. The fact that Napoleon at school shunned all physical contacts with homosexual boys is just what one would expect from all we know of his character. By the time of his Egyptian campaign he had become more broad-minded or cynical about such practices.

The really significant fact is that Mr Cronin is able to tell us quite a lot about Napoleon's attitude to homosexuality. Of what other great man, until quite recent times, can it be said that we know so much? Some of his contemporaries, from generals to lady's-maids have been able to tell us what were Napoleon's ideals of masculine attractiveness. He himself spoke of masculine and feminine types of men among his own friends. Mr Cronin himself tells us that: 'Napoleon found that his friendships with men often began with physical attraction, and this took a curious form.' Here he is referring to Napoleon's confession to Caulaincourt to which I have referred before that he felt 'nothing in the heart, everything in the loins and in another place which I shall leave nameless.'

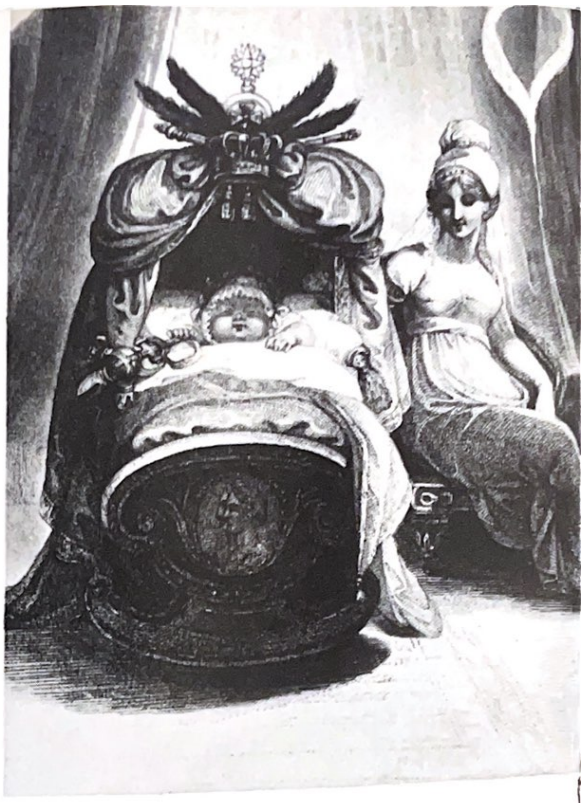
Napoleon himself plainly recognised the existence of the normal homosexual phase in a boy's development, for he wrote about one of his brothers, then a boy of thirteen: 'He loves his friend as he will love his mistress at twenty. Egoism is of later birth. At forty a man loves his fortune, and at eighty himself'. This rather cynical summary of male psychology gives us an insight into Napoleon's own mind. In his own case egoism did not long await its birth. That intense preoccupation with his own life-story, seen by Jacques Bainville as the main-spring of his life, could be called narcissism. As for his love of the great fortune which he amassed, it would be unfair to call him miserly, but he had a share of his mother's parsimony and shrewdness in money matters.

Napoleon probably also had some knowledge about what we now call Intersex Types, for he once wrote a story about a mysterious hermaphrodite being, an Androgyne Sibyl, which, according to the Russian writer Merezhkovsky, who studied Napoleon's literary works, recalled sometimes Napoleon himself and sometimes Dionysos the Changeling. Dionysos is an alternative name for Bacchus, in whose processions men dressed as women took part. *Everyman's Classical Dictionary* says this of Dionysos: 'The form of his body is that of a man, but approaches the female by

General Gaspard Gourgaud
From '*Napoléon à Sainte-Hélène*' *by Frédéric Masson*

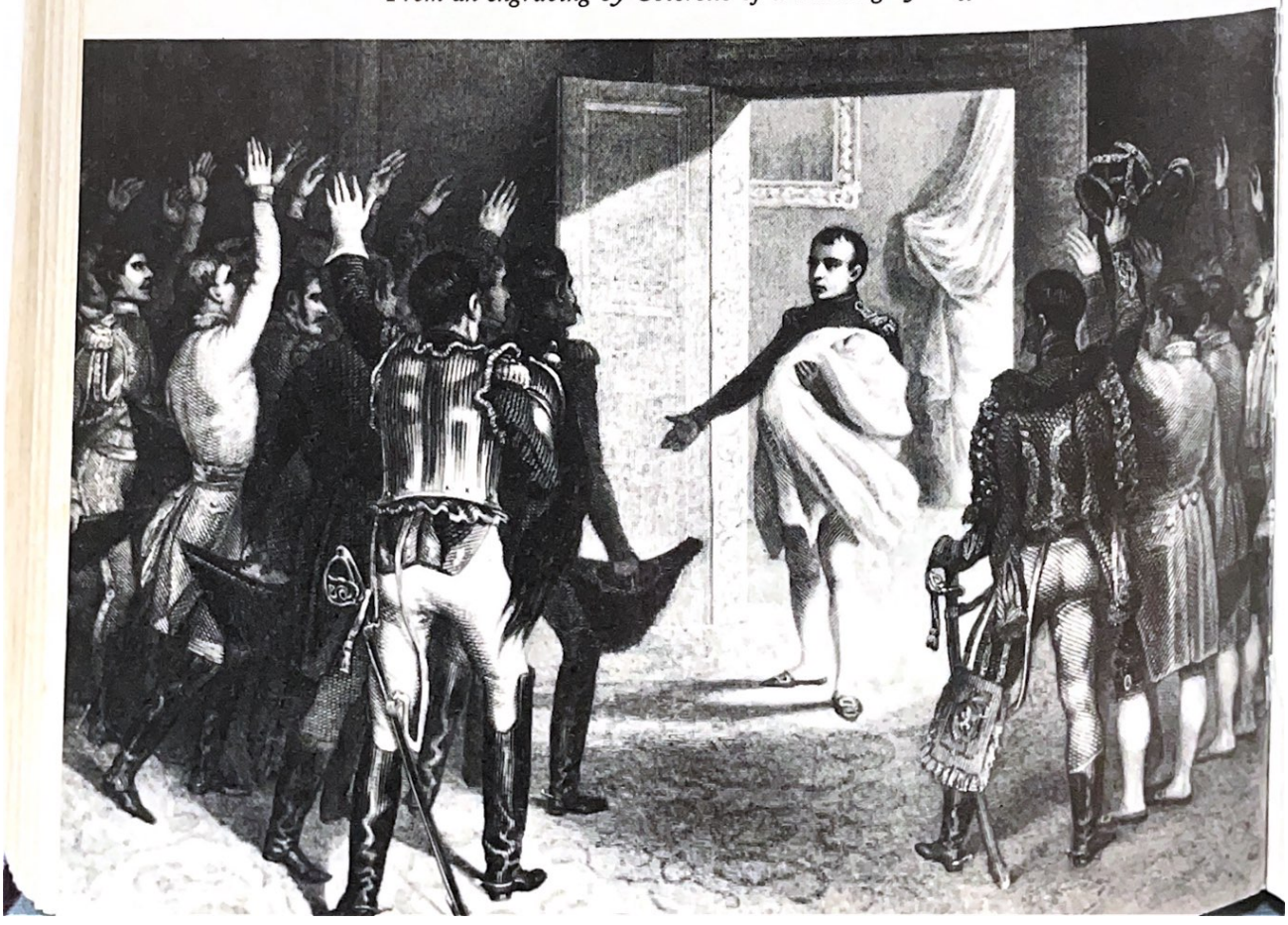
General Geraud Duroc, Duke of Friuli
From an engraving by Hopwood

The King of Rome as a child
From an engraving by Hopwood



The Cradle of the King of Rome and His Majesty
From a drawing by D. Leaoux

The birth of the King of Rome
From an engraving by Coterelle of a drawing by Raffet



its softness and roundness.' This is a good description of Napoleon's body, and it is at least possible that he had himself in mind when he wrote this story, as he so clearly had when, during his courtship of Désirée Clary, he wrote and dedicated to her his novel in which the young hero preferred soldiering to women.

Dr Praetorius points out that Napoleon refused to allow penal legislation against homosexuality, and that he was remarkably tolerant of his chancellor Cambacérès, whom he knew to be homosexual. In his understanding of such problems he was undoubtedly well ahead of his time; and those who seek to reform the laws in relation to homosexuality and prostitution have observed with approval that countries which were influenced by the *Code Napoléon* have inherited from its founder a broad-minded and humane attitude. But this, of course, tells us nothing about his own sexual orientation. Having now briefly surveyed Napoleon's life story, concentrating on certain aspects with a bearing on this subject, an attempt can be made to suggest where he should be placed in the spectrum of sexual adaptation.

CHAPTER IX

A TENTATIVE DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis which must now be attempted is a psychological one; the object being to suggest where we should fit Napoleon into the spectrum of sex, to which I referred in Chapter 4. In Chapter 2 I was concerned less with Napoleon's physical than with his mental condition. Various indications of an unquiet mind, a nervous or neurotic personality, led me to explore in Chapter 3 the psychological mechanisms which could have contributed to making him the kind of man he was, encouraging the development of aggressiveness amounting to megalomania. The evidence of hypogonadism disclosed at the examination of Napoleon's body, together with other indications, suggested that the key to his character would be found in his adaptation to sex or love. Having now examined his relations with men and women, and heard some of his own views on the subject, an assessment of these should enable me to make a tentative diagnosis of his sexual orientation. The question to be answered, is not 'was Napoleon homosexual?' but 'how homosexual was Napoleon?'.

I reject the various allegations of sexual perversions which were made against Napoleon, just as I reject the allegations, much more widely repeated and believed, that he committed incest with his three sisters and with his step-daughter. No one would attempt to deny that he had mistresses. In those days the keeping of a mistress may have led to marital disharmony but it was not greatly condemned by society. A monarch, who had probably married more for reasons of state than for love, was almost expected to have mistresses. The dying Queen Caroline urged her husband George II to marry again. 'No,' said the King between his sobs, 'I shall have mistresses.' One gets the impression that almost everyone had mistresses. If I had mentioned all of them, this book would have been even more over-loaded with notes.

My reason for believing that Napoleon did not indulge in grossly improper conduct, and that his affairs with his mistresses may not

have been very passionate on his part, or very satisfying to them, is that he was not physically equipped to be the great lover which he liked the world to believe that he was. The world is very gullible. The story was a sadder one. It was not only true sexual satisfaction and the joy of fatherhood which eluded him, but love, which is far more important. His own repeated statements justify this conclusion.

Désirée loved him. He couldn't let himself love her; and he tried in a pathetic roundabout way to tell her why. Josephine encouraged and comforted him, and his passionate letters to her prove that he longed to be able to love her and to have his love returned. According to Baron Imbert de St Amand, when someone congratulated Bonaparte on his conquests in Italy he replied that he wanted only one conquest, that of Josephine's heart. Marie Louise restored his waning confidence in his ability to attract women. Mademoiselle George certainly, and probably some of his other mistresses, frolicked with him. Marie Walewska may have loved him more than any other woman in his life, more even than Désirée or his sister Pauline. I hope he loved her a little. But most women could not forget the contemptuous way in which, from an early age, he habitually spoke of their sex, and his abominable, almost unbelievable, coarse vulgar rudeness. They had no doubt that he was a misogynist. His first wife and some of his mistresses confirmed his own admission of his 'feebleness in the game of love'. Pauline Fourès, his first mistress, with her trim boyish figure, was the first to drop a hint that he was not a potent lover. Some rather masculine and domineering women attracted him; and of two of these, the opera-singer Grassini, and the actress George, whose deep voices appealed to him, neither seems to have been very passionate, and one was suspected of homosexual practices.

Dr Leonard Guthrie, who in 1913 made the earliest study of the effect on Napoleon of hypopituitarism (deficiency of pituitary gland secretion) considered that his sexual impulses were very variable, often strong but waning quickly; and that he had been incapable of lasting affection for a woman. A later medical biographer, Raoul Brice, was of the opinion that 'most of his mistresses were momentary episodes'.

These medical views are borne out by the story of his relations with women, and by the opinion expressed by his intimate friend Caulaincourt. A somewhat immature element can be detected in his relations with women; and for all his determination towards

the end of his life to see both his marriages through a rosy haze of self-deception, and to pretend that both his wives had loved him truly, non-one who has studied his family life in any detail could claim that with either of them it was normal or happy. Whatever may be their capacity for heterosexual relations it would appear that those with any considerable homosexual component in their nature cannot settle down to family life based on true love for one woman, of which they are incapable. The dilemma of such unlucky people was succinctly put into words by a doctor, who was better known as an author – the late Somerset Maugham. According to his nephew, Robin Maugham, he said this about his unhappy marriage: 'My greatest mistake was that I tried to persuade myself that I was three-quarters normal and that only a quarter of me was queer, whereas it was really the other way round.*

Napoleon was always more at his ease among men, and as his life took the course which he planned for it, or into which circumstances forced him if you prefer it that way, so did he inevitably spend more and more time among men of all sorts. Many of them he professed to love in an abstract sort of fashion – his *enfanterie*[1] , his children in the Army; the handsome young aides-de-camp, valets and pages, whom he slapped and fondled. It is possible that he only really cared for men – Desaix, Lannes, Alexander I, briefly; Duroc above all and more enduringly; and even at the end the pathetic absurd Gourgaud. It is plain that a tendency to homosexuality was part of the pattern of his life of boredom in St Helena.

At what period of his life can we first detect indications that latent homosexuality was part of his 'life-style'? Not at school, where it was repressed, and sublimated in hard study. Possibly with Ceracchi, but more likely it was first in Egypt, where his affair with the boyish Pauline Fourès in her tight white hussar pantaloons coexisted with an expressed interest in homosexuality. Here he was surrounded by such conduct, including sodomy, which he spoke of as a characteristic weakness of great men. He made light of it in that revealing interview with the doleful victim of the Arabs. Naturally men began to voice the suspicion that this was the weakness of the emergent despot. His long and close friendship with Duroc was already maturing.

It would be unprofitable, and unnecessary to my thesis, to seek to show that there was anything deliberately or consciously

Somerset and all the Maughams, Robin Maugham, Heinemann, 1966.

homosexual in his dealings with men; but I cannot entirely absolve him from curious conduct which could have earned more than a casual paragraph from a sensation-seeking journalist; especially perhaps all those pinches and slaps, which, had the victims not accepted them as caresses but had complained to the police, could lead today to charges of assault (possibly even indecent assault, since the fondling or caressing of a woman without her consent qualifies for that adjective, and the same should presumably hold good for a man).

However I must not make too much of his habit of embracing men. In his day Britain really ruled the waves, and the average Englishman was contemptuous of the 'Mounseers', and their habit of kissing each other.

Today, accustomed as we are to the public masculine hugs of professional footballers, we may concede that the embraces of some foreign statesmen have no more significance than the double hand-clasps by which others demonstrate solidarity for the television camera. But I think that, for a great general, Napoleon did allow himself to become much too closely involved in a physical manner with men and boys of all sorts. Marie Louise, who was less simple than she is usually represented to have been, greatly disliked his habit of pinching and caressing *'des personnes qu'il affectionnât.'* He tended to keep generals and older men at arm's length. Constant commented on this, and described the great pleasure which it gave the troops when he publicly gave the popular general Friant 'a fraternal embrace' after his promotion – the only time Constant ever saw him do this to a senior officer on a campaign.

Although his embraces left Josephine and some of his mistresses unsatisfied, and were described by one of them as being 'on the furtive side', men and boys were surprised, pleased, and flattered by the warmth of his 'caresses', as they were called by some of those who received or witnessed them.

I have no hesitation in placing Napoleon at about the centre of the Kinsey seven point scale, in which Type 0 is the exclusively heterosexual, and Type 6 the exclusively homosexual male – Type 3, in which I shall provisionally place Napoleon, are those who respond psychically to partners of both sexes. They can conveniently be called bi-sexual. They may have greater experience of one sort or another chiefly through circumstances which bring them into contact with one or other of the sexes. Napoleon's life was led mostly among men. I have said that I place him

provisionally in Type 3. His overtly homosexual relations with some men might qualify him for Type 4, in which the life-style is predominantly homosexual, but a fair amount of heterosexual activity is maintained, and heterosexual stimuli are responded to rather definitely (these are the terms in which the types are defined in the Kinsey Report). Napoleon's half-hearted relations with Désirée Clary, and with most of his mistresses, tip the scales to the right; whilst a left-hand swing is indicated by the apparent ardour of his wooing of Marie Walewska and of Marie Louise. So I will place him finally between Types 3 and 4 in the spectrum of the Kinsey gradations.

Clifford Allen, in *A Textbook of Psychosexual Disorders*, describes twelve types of homosexual males, based on his clinical observation. Unlike the Kinsey scale these types are separate and do not merge into one another. Type 5, 'the so-called bisexual', Dr Allen regards as 'a partially developed heterosexual with sufficient homosexual residue to prevent normal behaviour'. Type 7 is one with 'an ancillary endocrine deficiency, and perhaps with eunuchoidism or some other cause of testicular failure.' Napoleon exhibited features of both these types, being in Type 7 physically, and Type 5 psychologically.

The circumstances of Napoleon's family background and early upbringing might lead a disciple of Freud to expect that he would become homosexually inclined. The sexual instinct if left to itself will usually find its outlet in normal channels, but certain psychological influences (and especially his effeminate body) encouraged him to linger, or in psychological jargon to become *fixated*, in the normal, though immature, homosexual phase. The immature homosexual component in his nature failed to die out or be repressed as his developing mind should have turned progressively towards women. It remained within him at least as a secondary device for attracting the affection for which he craved. His oft-repeated claim to have loved nobody has perhaps been too freely interpreted as evidence of a hard unloving self-centred nature. Can we not detect in it also a note of pathos?

It would be nice to be able to believe that he really loved his *enfanterie*, as they believed he did; that his feelings for them were those which should inspire the best kind of military leader. But we come up against all the terrible things he said. The outburst to Metternich about not caring for the lives of a million men condemns him, even if we forget the coarse and brutal versions which have found their way into print. 'Soldiers are made to be

killed,' he said; and too many witnesses testified to his gloating over the corpses of those who had died for him for this to be dismissed as slanderous. 'Small change,' he could say, turning over the bodies of his soldiers with his foot; and in 1812, after scoffing at the men drowning in the Beresina – 'Look at those toads!' – his chief regret about his enormous losses was that the Bourbons would take advantage of them.

His youthful hatred of the French and his avowed determination to do them all the harm he could, recurred at the very end, when the harm had indeed been done, and after Waterloo he could say to Flahaut that he was not really surprised, as it had been the same thing ever since Creçy. His callousness is not inconsistent with the occasions on which his better nature triumphed, because the sexual deviations of sadism and masochism often, indeed almost always, co-exist in the same individual, who thus derives sensual pleasure not only from inflicting or witnessing pain and suffering, but from being the victim of these. If it is true that it reinforced Napoleon's sense of power and his aggressiveness to see how many men had suffered death and mutilation in doing his bidding, it may still be true that he suffered with his children. His dual nature led him to call the gruesome battlefield of Borodino, heaped with the slain, the most beautiful battlefield he had ever seen, yet to exclaim aghast at the 'awful spectacle' of the even more bloody slaughter at Eylau.

Aggression and cruelty are to some extent a part of human, as of animal, nature. But when these traits amount to abnormal sadism, or sado-masochism, they are often unconsciously directed to assert a virility of which a man has deep-seated doubts; to bolster his sense of inferior sexual potency. The aggression which should be directed into normal sexual relations is directed into other channels. Napoleon's superabundant aggression spilled over into his public as well as his personal life, and led to cruelty, mental and physical, and to megalomaniac ambition.

After diagnosis come prognosis and treatment. Can we cure a patient of any deviations which are complicating his life, or help him to adjust himself to a useful life within the accepted framework of society? Having been deeply in his confidence during long hours of intimate discussion it is natural to feel kindly, or at any rate protective, towards him. Here we come up against the tendency which has led to what has been called 'judicial suspicion of psychiatry' – an attitude shared by many, who feel

that doctors are too ready to excuse offenders and to urge too warmly the need for treatment rather than punishment.

If we feel that beneath Napoleon's aggression, the panache and the self-designed Charlemagne regalia lay a deeply personal affliction, it is natural to share the sympathy expressed by the Tsar when he said: 'I pity him if he does not love anyone.' Napoleon might have spurned the sympathy of any doctor bold enough to offer it, and indeed sympathetic admiration is more appropriate. Napoleon, who discerned his own dual personality in other respects, may well have recognised and come to terms with the male and female components in his nature, which is what Karl Jung believed that every mature individual must do in order to achieve complete happiness and fulfilment.

Whatever may have been the source of his aggression he used it to magnificent effect; and when his splendid Empire had crumbled away he dedicated what was left of his life, despite moments of bitterness and self-pity, to self-justification and embellishment of his glowing legend – the success story of all time.

As a statesman he aimed to beat Machiavelli at his own game, and as a man he always knew how to charm when it suited him; so we cannot discount the possibility that it was mainly for political ends that he used that unusual almost feminine power to woo men, to which many people referred. The Emperor Alexander could have come under this heading; and it is amusing to speculate how history might have been altered had Metternich been susceptible to such tactics, and had brought about an alliance between France and Austria, as the charmed Tsar did between France and Russia.

Whether or not there was anything consciously homosexual in his approach to men, it is significant that he was usually much more pleasant to the young than to older men. He called his invaluable Chief of Staff, Berthier, a man sixteen years older than himself, his faithful brother-in-arms, his companion in war, and even his 'wife', but he treated him very badly, abusing or teasing him and sending him into sulking fits, as he did to Gourgaud. Many senior generals, statesmen and courtiers were terrified of him, and with good reason. Few can have forgotten the incident with Admiral Bruix (Note 12, Ch. 1) after which Napoleon, conscious of the adverse effect it could have on his reputation, sent agents into the town and camp, silencing the murmurs with gifts of gold.

We do not hear of his sudden rages and assaults breaking out

upon young people; in fact he himself boasted of his magnetic influence over the young, and he contrasted the fear which he inspired in senior officers and statesmen with the familiarity which he encouraged in his young soldiers, who innocently addressed him in the familiar form, which was otherwise reserved for relatives and for Duroc. General Count Caulaincourt said that the soldiers spoke to Napoleon with greater freedom than they could to their own officers. Napoleon certainly knew how to speak to them as he wandered round the camp fires, which he loved to do. General de Ségur wrote: 'Each private imagined he had contracted an intimate acquaintance with the great man.'

Whatever gave him his unique power over men, any general might envy him his gift for understanding and inspiring soldiers. Perhaps his bisexual nature compensated him to some extent for any unhappiness which it may have caused in his private life by helping him to woo the affections of the young and impressionable in a way which contributed greatly to his magnetic sway as a military leader, and helped to establish the Napoleonic Legend. These were the men who would survive him long enough to foster and perpetuate it. The older ones, many of whom had won titles and riches under his rule, knew him better, but had a vested interest in silence or consent.

In the recent fashion for criticising Napoleon some of his detractors have even tried to rob him of his reputation for hard work, though on rather slender grounds. One cannot but stand overawed by the record of his achievements, his personal attention alike to great affairs of State and to the petty trivialities of the day-to-day administration of the country. To accomplish all this he used to wake himself by an effort of will at 2 a.m. so as to work undisturbed by interruptions. We may well wonder how he found time for his mistresses, or even for his wives; and the knowledge of his physical and psychological difficulties in the sexual sphere can but increase our amazement at the extent and variety of adventures in that field which have been attributed to him. A homosexual tendency, even if deep-seated and unconfessed, could have been a powerful cause of the fear of impotence which was an important problem, perhaps the central problem, in his life.

Perhaps then I have been unfair in suggesting that there was some failure on Josephine's part to help him to develop his sex life on conventional monogamous lines. Could any human agency have controlled that phenomenal personality, and confined him within

the bounds which restrict less overwhelming individuals?

Those among his contemporaries and friends, like Caulaincourt, de Bourrienne, and Madame de Rémusat, who thought that sex meant very little to him, and that he was incapable of love, may have been right so far as his conscious mind was concerned. But who can tell if it was not unconscious mechanisms resulting from factors impeding the development of a completely normal happy family life and the procreation of children, the fulfilment of the biological purpose of life, which worked within that exceptionally active and fertile mind to produce the earth-shaking Napoleon?

With a completely normal male body, a more satisfactory balance of hormones, and less complex psychological influences in his early life, he might have settled down to simple uncomplicated married life with Désirée Clary, and General Napoleone Buonaparte might have been just one of a distinguished clique of military leaders of the French Republic.

What fascinating pages of history would have been lost to the world.

CHAPTER X

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF THE KING OF ROME?

The King of Rome, Napoleon II or the Duke of Reichstadt, affectionately known as L'Aiglon, was officially accepted as Napoleon's son and heir. It is hard to know where to start in relating the doubts which surrounded the paternity of the child, whose birth was hailed with such joy by the French people, to whom an heir for the Emperor seemed to promise some hope of peace and stability.

Our two fertile sources of Palace gossip, Napoleon's secretary and his valet, were somewhat guarded in their comments. De Méneval wrote that 'lying reports were first spread as to the legitimacy of the child'; whilst Constant expressed surprise that people should be so ready to believe that Napoleon could have been the father of various illegitimate children, yet so suspicious about his being the father of his one and only legitimate child.

Biographies and history books abound in allusions to the doubts about who was the real father of this child, doubts to which even the guides at the Schönbrunn Palace, where the King of Rome died, were said to be still referring in the late nineteenth century, telling visitors that whoever was the father it was not Napoleon.

Edward de Wertheimer, writing in 1902, quoted a police report of 1814 which stated that the people of Vienna, satisfied that the child seemed to resemble the Hapsburgs, declared openly: 'He belongs to our family. Now we are convinced that he is no spurious child.' Marie Louise, however, caused resentment by saying that she could see no likeness to herself, but thought that he resembled Napoleon in appearance, and in 'his ways and manners'.

The more one reads about that period of history the stronger grows the impression that, at any rate among what passed for high society in Napoleon's Empire, the last person to be suspected of being a child's father was usually its mother's husband. It is really not surprising that rumours about the King of Rome should have

been seized upon avidly in France and other countries, in which millions who hated and feared Napoleon were only too eager to hear and to repeat unkind gossip which could slightly deflate the self-importance of the megalomaniac. The French historian G. Lefébvre tells us that 'to Wellington and other noble lords Napoleon was never anything but "bony", and the King of Rome his bastard.'[1] The rumours certainly spread very widely throughout Europe, though naturally somewhat cautiously and clandestinely in France itself. They have continued to crop up in many books about Napoleon up to the present day.

At first the main motif of the whispering campaign was that the birth of Napoleon's heir was a hoax, a faked pregnancy with a substituted child. Some substance was lent to this theory by the discovery of a dead new-born infant in the Palace on the 21st April 1811, a month after the birth of the King of Rome. The secret of its birth was never discovered, and the Prefect of the Palace, Baron de Bausset, said: 'We conjectured that one of the numerous footmen might have concealed it in one of the large covered baskets employed for the purpose of carrying the articles necessary for the breakfast.' So the baby was buried, and the incident dismissed as one of those things which were apt to happen in Palaces, though it must have aroused some suspicions.

The Emperor had laid himself open to this kind of suspicion by having planned just such a deception during his first marriage; but, on the occasion of the birth of the King of Rome, Dr Corvisart, who had promised not to reveal that he had been asked to co-operate in the previous little plot, was able to reassure various friends that this time there could have been no such deception, for he had been present throughout Marie Louise's long and difficult labour.

The undoubted fact that the baby had been born to Marie Louise threw the gossip-mongers back upon speculation that someone other than Napoleon had been the father. I have related how the Tsar Alexander, at first incredulous about the rumours of Napoleon's impotence, was finally won over and shared his mother's opposition to the proposal that his sister should marry Napoleon, fearing that she might be subjected to an adulterous liaison to obtain an heir to the throne of France. Some time after the birth of the King of Rome, when the Countess of Choiseul Gouffier told the Tsar that the child's portrait promised a strong resemblance to his father, Alexander replied: 'That is fortunate for him if we may believe all that is said regarding his birth'.

Neither the Tsar nor less illustrious scandal-mongers were able to suggest who might have been the father of this child, if it was not Napoleon. A pretty obvious candidate was an Austrian general of French extraction, Count Adam Adalbert Neipperg,[2] whom Chateaubriand called 'the man who dared to lay his eggs in the eagle's nest'. Neipperg had quite a distinguished career as a soldier and diplomat, and acted as Chamberlain to the Empress Marie Louise during her visit to Prague in 1812.

It has been widely believed that when Metternich and the Austrian Emperor chose him to be the Governor of Marie Louise's household, after Napoleon's first abdication, they hoped that he would help to separate her from her husband. The friendship between them speedily became more than a platonic one; and soon they were living together quite openly, and had three children, two of whom were illegitimate, having been born before what Marie Louise liked to call their 'morganatic marriage' was regularised by their marriage after Napoleon's death. These children were a daughter born on May 1st 1817, and a son born on August 9th 1821, and they were created Count and Countess de Montenuovo. This was apparently a play on words, being an Italian version of Neuberg, which sounds like Neipperg.

If Wellington was correctly informed that Marie Louise was 'with child by Neipperg' at the time of Waterloo, this must have been one of several of her pregnancies which are known to have ended in miscarriages.[3] The obstetricians at the time of the birth of the King of Rome had told her that she would be unable to have any more children, but Neipperg eventually proved them to have been wrong. When he was appointed to be Governor of Marie Louise's household Neipperg said to the woman who was then his mistress: 'Before six months are over I shall be her lover, and not long afterwards her husband.' His portrait reproduced in this book showing a gay cavalier with one eye covered by a black patch is that of a man who looks as if he could be relied upon to fulfil such a boast.

Appearances can be deceptive, but in his case they were not, for he certainly possessed the ability to attract women, the uninhibited gallantry which gleams in the one self-confident eye, and the dashing romantic manner which the portrait conveys. He was already an experienced seducer, and had had at least four illegitimate children in a liaison with Teresa Pola, the wife of one of his friends. But in prophesying his speedy conquest of Marie Louise he may possibly have been betting on a certainty, because

they had been friends before his appointment, even intimate friends, and he may have known that she had begun to fall in love with him.

M.E. Ravage in *Empress Innocence*, a study of Marie Louise, wrote:

> In France, in Italy, and in many other places in Europe the fantastic legend was being assiduously circulated that he and Marie-Louise had in fact been sweethearts before her marriage, that he had followed her to Strasbourg and Paris out of motives of gallantry, that he had enjoyed her favours during her visit to Prague in 1812, and that the Emperor Francis and the Austrian Government had attached him to her as knight of honour at Aix for no other purpose than to win her away from her husband.*

Whether this was indeed a 'fantastic legend' or the truth; whether Neipperg conducted himself like a true 'knight of honour' or deployed the amiably dishonourable intentions which that rather lecherous leer in his portrait seems to promise, can have little bearing on the subject of the paternity of Marie Louise's first child. It is hardly possible that he could have been the father of the King of Rome. The eagle's nest had been much too jealously guarded for nearly a year between the arrival of the new Empress in France and the birth of her son. The period was actually three hundred and fifty seven days – just a bit too long, though it is unsafe to be dogmatic in such questions.

Professor Glaister, a leading medico-legal expert, concluded that a 354 day pregnancy is not impossible.[4] But the evidence is all against Neipperg having been the father. Marie Louise's adulterous liaison with him was quite soon to become notorious, and in her later life she was very immoral. She may have known Neipperg before she came to France as a bride, but thereafter she had no opportunity, even if she had the inclination, to be unfaithful to her husband before the birth of her first child.

Napoleon was well aware of the speculation in Europe about his impotence, a subject which he himself was prepared to discuss with surprising frankness. He must have known that news of his previous plan to present a substituted child as his own son and heir had leaked out. He was determined that no shadow of doubt or suspicion should fall upon any child of his second marriage, and

*Wm. Heinemann, 1932

from the moment of her arrival in France Marie Louise was surrounded by a highly organised system of espionage. She was even spied upon for a considerable time after the birth of the child, which was witnessed by an imposing array of doctors and officials. As befitted her rank she was permanently attended by numerous ladies-in-waiting, and during every hour of the twenty-four was watched or guarded by her own court and by functionaries of every description.

There were however certain individuals who, with Napoleon's consent, could have performed for her a service which rumour insisted that her husband was unable to perform. I am referring to the doctors who were in constant and intimate attendance upon the Empress in order to detect signs of pregnancy which would justify an announcement to the waiting world. The late Mr Shaw Desmond, in his book *Personality and Power*, wrote this about Napoleon:

> He was without religious feeling in the Christian sense, and finding himself incapable of giving her a child to be his heir, caused his wife, Maria Louisa of Austria, to be artifically inseminated, and successfully.

Unfortunately Mr Desmond did not reveal the source of the information which emboldened him to make, without peradventure and in a tone of such conviction, so arresting a statement about the method of securing an heir to the Throne of France. For reasons which I have made abundantly clear I feel that he may very well be right; but how I wish he had told us how he found out about it!

In the course of the medical surveillance of Marie Louise there was at least one false alarm of pregnancy, and it is obvious that there were ample opportunities for a doctor to carry out artificial insemination, which is not a particularly modern practice. A form of artificial insemination was carried out as long ago as the middle of the sixteenth century, and not long before the marriage of Marie Louise and Napoleon, the great Scottish surgeon John Hunter had successfully carried out the procedure.[5]

It is true that a French specialist had adopted a sceptical attitude towards Hunter's claim, and had said cynically that if he were the husband he would wish to be informed what kind of syringe John Hunter had used. But can it be doubted that Napoleon, who was intensely interested in science, and in sexual

matters in particular, might have known about the possibility, and had he wished it to be tried would have easily overcome any doubts or hesitations on the part of his doctors?

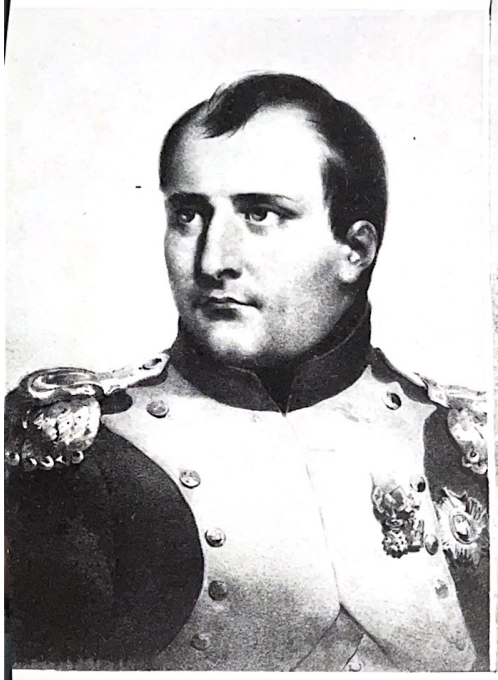
If confirmation of Mr Desmond's categorical assertion is to be found anywhere it is presumably in secret State papers, and it would have been in keeping with Napoleon's character if he had left a personal record about this and other aspects of his private life. His own life had a peculiar fascination for him, and he had little reserve or modesty about the most personal matters. Count Horace de Viel Castel in his memoirs, told of the intended publication of a manuscript entirely in the handwriting of Napoleon, entitled *My Private Life*, which was suppressed by Napoleon III. This might have supplied the answers to some of the intriguing questions posed by Napoleon's sex life.

Many of those who had questioned the Emperor's ability to father a child, and who had suspected some sort of trickery about the birth of the King of Rome, despite the elaborate precautions taken to eliminate any possible doubt, eventually allowed their suspicions to be allayed by two arguments – the evident love which the Emperor felt for the child, and its alleged resemblance to him.

However passionate the Emperor's devotion to the child this can hardly be claimed as very strong evidence of paternity. After all he was devotedly fond of the first son of Hortense and Louis, whom he intended to adopt as his heir, and he was utterly grief-stricken at the boy's death. To have an heir meant everything to him.

A marked resemblance of the King of Rome to Napoleon could be accepted as strong evidence, if indeed it really existed about which there is not complete unanimity. The distinguished authority, Frédéric Masson, enumerated many features in which the King of Rome did not in the least resemble Napoleon, and he considered that he looked a typical Austrian prince, though perhaps in his earliest years he seemed to look a little like Napoleon, which was not perhaps very difficult as Napoleon's face in middle life was plump and rather baby-like. Many contemporary observers thought that the child looked a typical Hapsburg. Any likeness to Napoleon which existed was of course seized upon by court painters, such as Isabey, and, in any miniatures intended for France, what Masson called a vaguely Napoleonic appearance is to be seen *(l'aspect reste vaguement Napoléonien.)*.

Masson drew attention to Napoleon's reluctance at first to allow



Napoleon

The Duke of Reichstadt as an Austrian officer

The Count de Neipperg

Pauline Bonaparte
From an engraving by Mme Fournier

Hortense Beauharnais
From an engraving by Bosselman

anyone except courtiers and officials to see the child. He kept his wife and son immured from all outside contacts, as if waiting to see if any family likeness would show itself. Surely however he need not have worried, in view of the elaborate precautions he had taken, even if Mr Shaw Desmond's statement about artificial insemination is the true story. In that procedure there are two possibilities, referred to as A.I.(H), or A.I.(D), according to whether the husband or an un-named donor is involved as the father.

If the assumption is justified that Napoleon, as a case of pituitary eunuchoidism was incapable of being a father, he would presumably have chosen one of his brothers for that honour. The strong likeness between the Bonaparte brothers is very noticeable in all the family portraits.

Despite the odd streak of cruelty in Napoleon's relations with children, which, as I have shown, manifested itself even towards his own baby son, he certainly does seem to have loved the child more genuinely than its mother did. Marie Louise was incapable of tender love for her first child, never took him in her arms, and disliked kissing him. In fact she said that she could not understand how anyone could kiss a child, and on one occasion, when Napoleon had seen her wiping her cheek after he had kissed her, and asked if he disgusted her, she replied: 'No. I do the same when the King of Rome kisses me. It is just a habit of mine.' Not unnaturally the Emperor seemed dissatisfied with this cold and stilted answer.

When her family life with Napoleon had come to an end, and she was living with Neipperg, she starved her son of love, left him with his grandfather in Austria, and hardly ever allowed him to visit her, although doing so gave him obvious pleasure. She could find room in her heart only for her lover Neipperg. When Napoleon's faithful secretary de Méneval, unsuccessful in his attempts to persuade her to return to her husband, left her to return to France, he went to say goodbye to the four-year-old King of Rome. The child's last message to his father, in a whisper, was 'Monsieur Méva, tell him that I always love him well'.

When at last he learned of the life his mother was living, and about her illegitimate children, he said sadly: 'She was not the wife my father deserved.' Marie Louise refused to visit her son until he was within a few weeks of his death at the age of 21, and already speechless from tuberculous laryngitis. It has been all too justly said of her that she was neither wife nor mother.

She did at first try her best to be a dutiful wife to Napoleon but even so she was never to him the possessive wife which she became in her subsequent marriages. Before her adulterous union with Neipperg was legalised by marriage, after Napoleon's death, he had made some fairly determined attempts to escape from her and resume his military or diplomatic career, but she put a stop to that and seems to have become really deeply devoted to her general. Her profound grief at his death did not however last long, although it was not for five years that she decided to marry again.

Her choice fell on Neipperg's first permanent successor as Grand Master of her Court of Parma, Count Charles de Bombelles. He is said to have been amazed by her proposals, and to have made it plain that he had never thought of taking over anything more than Neipperg's official duties. But she persuaded him that the post carried more intimate obligations, and that their marriage was essential to her happiness; so he yielded and they were married only six months after his arrival in Parma, the Grand Duchy awarded to her by the Powers after Napoleon's defeat and exile.

Compared with the wonderfully rakish appearance of Neipperg with one roving eye gleaming roguishly from below the black bandage, de Bombelles' portrait shows a dull-looking fellow. Little is known of their marriage, which Marie Louise may have desired as a cloak for her amorous conduct, for which nymphomania is not an excessive verdict, in the light of André Castelot's disclosures in his book *Napoleon's Son.** He writes that 'her sex life had become more dissolute than ever'; that 'two men were kept fully occupied in attending to their sovereign's wants'; and that Baron Marschall stated that a sentry had to be stationed at her door to bar the way to her over-numerous lovers, until the sentry was found in her bed.

During her third marriage she had a notorious affair with a tenor, Jules Lecomte, who wrote enthusiastically: 'I am Napoleon's successor . . . I sang to Marie Louise, and she kept me to supper – which lasted all night. When I awoke in the morning I fancied myself the Emperor!' A less starry-eyed philanderer might have detected something less than imperial, even a trifle vulgar, in the much too merry Madame Bombelles.

Even when she was Empress some people considered her rather common, an opinion borne out by the observant valet, Constant. He wrote that 'Josephine had all the qualities of the aristocrat; Marie Louise all those of the bourgeois'. During the later years of

* Hamish Hamilton, 1960.

her marriage to Napoleon, which lasted only some four years, she was much addicted to coarse talk and the telling of doubtful stories, rather a significant fault which she admitted to one of her ladies-in-waiting, the somewhat censorious and critical Duchess of Montebello, Lannes' widow.

Several historians have observed the degeneration of Marie Louise from the modest, innocent young princess and dutiful wife, to the unfaithful wife, neglectful mother and insatiable lover; but none have attempted to suggest a reason for all this. The reaction of a young girl abruptly removed from a life of submission in the strict Austrian Court to a life of wealth and indulgence in the permissive society of Napoleon's court could account for much, but there must have been some more profound influence at work.

I believe that the most likely cause was the very difficult time which she had during the birth of her first child. In all women pregnancy and child-birth are accompanied by emotional as well as metabolic changes. Happily in the great majority these leave no permanent ill-effects. But in some cases personality changes, even including insanity, may follow the birth of the child; and this is rather more likely to occur if the labour has been followed by serious exhaustion. A common result of such puerperal psychoses is a loss of the mother's normal feelings of affection for her husband and for the baby.

Marie Louise's labour was difficult, prolonged, and painful, and was altogether a dreadfully alarming experience for a young girl of nineteen. The obstetrician Dubois, terrified of Napoleon, and unnerved by his unenviable position of responsibility, completely lost his head despite the Emperor's eminently sound advice to forget that his patient was the Empress and to treat her as any peasant's wife.

When he told Napoleon that he feared he could not save both mother and child he was told: 'Save the mother. It is her right.' But Marie Louise did not know this, and when Dubois produced obstetrical forceps she was terrified, and became convinced that she was to be sacrificed for the sake of the French people. She did not hesitate to proclaim her fears loudly and hysterically. Her fears are understandable. She now knew her alarming husband better than when he had been all kindness and consideration to his young bride. She had seen his evil side.

I think that Napoleon has been excessively praised for his decision to save the mother, even when he knew that the child about to be born (a breech presentation) was indeed the son he

had prayed for. Surely no normal husband could have answered such a question differently. I am even less disposed to join in the chorus of praise because, before giving Dubois his well-publicised order to save the mother, he had reacted much more crudely, saying: 'Well, if she's dead we'll have a funeral'. This could possibly have been intended to shock the scared doctor to his senses, but it sounds horribly like the bad side, the hairy heel.

To the difficult and exhausting labour, surrounded by the customary witnesses of royal accouchements, but with no one present who loved her as a person; feeling as she did that they were all thinking of the future for France rather than of her, all aware that Paris was waiting for the 101st gun which would signal the birth of a prince; to all this one should add the preceding months of awareness that she had been brought to France for one purpose; all the alarms, rumours and suspicions. All this added to the normal emotional strain of pregnancy and childbirth was surely enough. But could there have been one potent and unusual factor, difficult for a man to speculate about – the effect of knowing that the child was the result of an experiment of excessive rarity in those days, except perhaps in veterinary practice? It is an intriguing possibility.

Napoleon in his will acknowledged two illegitimate children, known as the Count Léon, and Count Alexandre Walewski, but gossip, romantic writers, and even historians have credited him with several others.

In Chapter 3 I referred to the 'fantasy parents' which children and adolescents sometimes adopt as part of their day-dreams and unconscious striving towards what Adler called the Goal of Superiority. Growing ambition and longings to be 'somebody' lead to dissatisfaction with their home and parents, who they feel are too dull and commonplace to be the true parents of one who feels such inherent superiority. Flights of fancy about being nobly born are obviously more likely to be indulged in by illegitimate children, who know only one parent.

Napoleon's unique position in the world, and his reputation for dalliance, made him an obvious choice for such fantasies. Long after his death, claims to be descended from some real or fancied liaison of the great man were quite frequently made.

In a book *Les Secrets de Bonaparte*, published in 1889. Charles Nauroy mentioned a number of such claims. A child born to Madame Duchâtel was somewhat vaguely attributed to Napoleon;

and so was a certain Mademoiselle Falkenberg, born in the archbishop's palace in Cologne. A Monsieur Auchard, said to be a son of Napoleon, was granted a pension of 1200 francs by Napoleon III; so it is evident that the establishment of such claims could be a profitable affair. It did not prove to be so in the case of a coloured man, sometimes referred to as 'The Black Napoleon', who claimed to be the result of some affair with a negress during the Egyptian campaign. He took to a life of crime, and was guillotined at Aix in 1824. The claim of Emilie Pellapra, later Princesse de Chimay, to be a daughter of Napoleon seems to have been almost solely based on her fancied resemblance to him. His brief friendship with her mother is likely to have been a discreet one, because he was then married to Marie Louise, and still in the stage of idolising her because of her imperial lineage, and because she had borne the son who was to continue his dynasty.

It was even suggested that he was the father of a child called Yousouf, although the boy, who lived in Elba, was already five years old when Napoleon landed there. Yousouf had in fact been captured by Barbary pirates, and in due course he was to become a French general, after being befriended as a boy in Elba by the kind-hearted Pauline, Napoleon's sister. This is the sort of 'evidence' used to support the claims of many illegitimate children said to have been Napoleon's. Before he started to boast about his amours it was not he, but the women themselves, who gave publicity to his transient affairs.

But to return to the two who figured in his will.

The particular importance of Count Léon, the son born on 13th December 1806 to Eléonore Denuelle de la Plaigne, was that he provided Napoleon with evidence which temporarily satisfied him that he was capable of fatherhood. It was precisely for that purpose that the liaison between Eléonore and Napoleon was arranged and encouraged by his sister Caroline and her husband Joachim Murat. Most historians agree that it was a deliberately conducted experiment, as part of the campaign waged by the Bonaparte family against Josephine, whom they hated and referred to as Madame Beauharnais, or as 'the Emperor's present companion', rather than as the Empress.

Napoleon disliked any scandal or impropriety which could affect the reputation of his own family circle, and but for his urgent desire to prove his potency would surely have avoided an entanglement with a young woman of such dubious parentage and social standing as Eléonore. Madame Campan had had grave

misgivings about admitting her to the famous girls' school, where she became a friend of Caroline Bonaparte, who in due course was to befriend her when the scoundrel to whom her parents had married her, the bogus 'Captain' Revel, was imprisoned for embezzlement and forgery.

Suspicions that Napoleon was responsible for Revel's imprisonment to get him out of the way, as he had got rid of Pauline Fourès' husband, are almost certainly unfounded. Revel was a blackguard who had left the Army under a cloud on account of dishonesty, and he needed no help to get himself into prison, which he did just two months after his marriage to Eléonore, who divorced him some ten months later. After his release from prison he combined a career of swindling and roguery with attempts to blackmail his former wife, and the writing of scurrilous pamphlets about her, and about the Murats and Napoleon.

The story of Revel, Eléonore, her three marriages and her son is a complex one liberally sprinkled with lawsuits, during one of which Eléonore actually denied that Léon was her son. Léon himself finally degenerated into a rogue, a swindler, a chronic debtor and 'sponger' skilled only in the writing of begging letters – in fact so like Revel in character that one is tempted to make what, in the disordered society of those days would have been almost an absurd suggestion, that his mother's husband might have been his real father after all.

Napoleon's elation on being assured that he was the father of Eléonore's son gave way to torturing uncertainty and wrath after he learned that she had been Murat's mistress, and realised that his experiment in paternity had not been free from ambiguity – not in fact a properly controlled experiment. Josephine knew all about the affair, and it has been assumed by many that it was she who saw to it that doubts were planted in his mind.

Queen Hortense was one of those who never believed that Léon was a son of her stepfather; and in her Memoirs she assures us that Napoleon himself did not believe it either after he had wrung from Eléonore the confession that Murat had also been her lover. Count Viel Castel's report of the conversation in 1854, during which Las Cases described Napoleon's admission of his feebleness in love-making, included the statement that Napoleon 'did not regard Count Léon as his son; he attributed the paternity of that child to Murat.'

There is other evidence that Napoleon was finally convinced that Murat was Léon's father; but he continued to take an interest

in the boy's career, and remembered him in his will. Léon himself always claimed to be Napoleon's son. He was not the man to abandon such a profitable claim, however strong the evidence against it. In those days blood tests were not available to help in such decisions, and evidence was accepted which would carry little weight in paternity cases today, such as a fancied resemblance to a supposed parent.

It has been thought that Napoleon decided to cross-examine Eléonore about her relations with Murat because, as the years of his intimacy with Marie Walewska, the most truly beloved of his mistresses, went by without any signs of a child, his self-confidence was undermined, and he began to suspect that he had too easily accepted the assurances of his sister and her husband that Léon was his son.

But meanwhile his acceptance of Léon as his son had brought about its intended result. Josephine had been divorced and Marie Louise was now his second wife. On May 5th 1810 Marie Walewska gave birth to a boy, Count Florian Alexandre Joseph Walewski, who was generally believed to be Napoleon's son. He was certainly a very different kind of man to Count Léon, and had quite a distinguished career as a soldier, diplomat and statesman, including service as Ambassador in London and as Minister for Foreign Affairs under Napoleon III.

If he had any memories of the secret visit with his mother to Napoleon in Elba they must have been exciting and romantic ones, for a four year old child could not have realised that their kind protector was hastily smuggling them off the island to avoid compromising the chance of the Empress coming to join him.

But, unlike Léon, he does not seem to have ever felt the need to bolster up his own personality by allusions to his distinguished father. Quite the reverse. On one occasion, when he overheard some ladies commenting on his resemblance to his 'illustrious father', he gently snubbed them by pretending to be surprised that they were old enough to remember Count Walewski.

A certain romantic aura has been created around the name of Marie Walewska, who is to me, as to many, the most attractive of all the women in the Napoleonic story. She may even have been the one whom Napoleon loved most deeply, despite his repeated assurances that the pride of place was Josephine's. Marie Walewska certainly deserved his love, for she was the most loyal of all the women in his life, apart from his mother and his sister Pauline.

It is easy enough to condone Marie's adulterous liaison with

Napoleon by pointing to the pressures to which she was subjected and the intensely patriotic motives which led her to betray her elderly husband. All this has been given due weight in Chapter 7; and it is now necessary to consider whether the Tsar was right when he dismissed Caulaincourt's assertion that Walewska's son was sufficient proof of Napoleon's virility. Marie's early success in bearing a son to her decrepit old husband may have inspired Countess Potocka's malicious innuendo (see Note 2, Chapter 7) and the Tsar's comment: 'We all know what young Polish women are like. She probably had other lovers.' Even if that is regarded an an unwarrantable insinuation it cannot be denied that, however single-minded and patriotic her motives for yielding to Napoleon may have been, the result was that she did become an adulteress.

However protracted and agonised her hesitations before taking that first step, if indeed it really was her first step, it can hardly be called unjust, even if it is a little unchivalrous, to wonder if just one more step might have been taken, and taken a little more easily, during the three years of her liaison with Napoleon before her second child was born. My own guess, and it can be no more than a guess, is that such a step could have been taken with Duroc, Napoleon's most intimate friend, his 'conscience', from whom he had no secrets. Napoleon's affection for Duroc is fully authenticated, but opinions differed as to whether Duroc really returned the Emperor's affection. If those who believed that he secretly disliked the Emperor were right he would not have been restrained by loyalty and devotion from making advances to his mistress. He might even have done so out of spite, or in a spirit of adventure.

On the other hand, knowing Napoleon as intimately as he did, he might have thought that he would be doing him a favour by fathering a child which the Emperor could accept as his own, thus relieving him from the uncertainty into which he had been thrown when he felt forced to believe that Murat, and not he himself, was the father of Léon.

All this is mere speculation, but there is no doubt that if he had the inclination he certainly had plenty of opportunities. It was Duroc who first met Marie at the post-house in Bronie, who acted as go-between in the early stages of the affair, and explained the sign language which the Emperor used when he wanted to preserve secrecy. Dr. Cabanés, who wrote many articles and books about Napoleon's private life and medical history, quoted a Cuban doctor, Diego Carbonell, who in 1914 cast doubts upon Napoleon's fertility, and suggested that one of his 'favourites'

could have been the father of his bastards. Dr. Carbonell did not name Duroc, but Duroc is in fact the only man to whom the term 'favourite' of Napoleon has ever been applied. We have seen, in Chapter 8 that it was in fact so used in Napoleon's lifetime by at least one author, by contemporary gossip, and by the distinguished General Foy, who knew both Duroc and the Emperor personally.

If it was true, as I believe, that Napoleon was unable to have children it is very likely that he must have known this himself, and realised that the rumours about this impotence[6] or sterility, of which he was well aware, were soundly based in fact. It is therefore a fair question to ask why a man of his intellect allowed, indeed encouraged, the world to believe that illegitimate children attributed to him were his own offspring. The answer is not hard to find, when we recall his extraordinary attitude to the accusations of incest, when he did nothing to discourage, but actually seemed to welcome, suggestions that he was the father of the son of his stepdaughter Hortense.

On his own admission it is plain that he wanted to let it be thought, whatever the cost to his reputation, that he was capable of reproduction. He would rather be thought immoral than impotent. He was unmoved by the distress which the scandalous gossip caused to Josephine and Hortense, or by the devastating effect which it had upon Hortense's relations with her husband. Typically Napoleon could see the situation only from his own point of view. It was splendid that the people should believe him to be a father, and Hortense should be proud to be the means of bringing this pleasure to Napoleon and to France. For this abominably selfish attitude there were dynastic as well as personal motives. With his remarkable capacity for identifying himself with the nation he felt that the interests of the French people were identical with his own, or if they were not, then they ought to be.

If Napoleon's despotic egotism was nourished by deep springs arising from unconscious psychological processes contributing to the development of a career, which, however picturesque and enthralling to the historian, brought unimaginable grief and suffering to millions of human beings, then it may be interesting to consider whether modern thought in the realm of psychology might point the way to future avoidance of such consequences of one man's mental disturbance.

CHAPTER XI

FAMILY HISTORY

An orderly sequence in the taking of case histories and the clinical examination of patients is so drummed into undergraduates in Edinburgh as to become an automatic procedure. I have let the side down by leaving family history to the end; but in its proper place it would have distracted attention from my central character. He was the most extraordinary member of an unusual family. In Chapter 3, correcting the erroneous belief, which has even found its way into books, that Napoleon 'rose from the ranks', I explained that he had no reason to be ashamed of his heredity. His family on both sides belonged to the Corsican nobility.

His mother's family, the Ramolinos, had been the ruling clan in Lombardy in the fourteenth century and had emigrated to Corsica in the fifteenth century. The Buonapartes arrived in Corsica about a hundred years later, from Liguria, where they had been of the administrative and professional class.

The importance of Napoleon's famous mother in the development of her son's character has been discussed in Chapter 3; and obviously so far as he was concerned she was the most important member of that family of adventurers, whose descendants continued to be embroiled in scandals which greatly troubled the weak unhappy Napoleon III – *Napoléon le petit*, who was himself almost certainly not really a Bonaparte at all.

Napoleon I was the second of the eight surviving children in his family. His mother, Letizia, had thirteen children, and, as he said, could have had twenty if his father had not died. Most of his brothers and sisters had little direct influence on his career. They accepted him as the effective head of the family, and took what he gave them without much gratitude. They shared the same heredity, and considered that they had the right to share his greatness, not surprisingly perhaps as their overwhelming brother progressed so quickly from calling hereditary monarchs his cousins

to that crowning absurdity of referring to Louis XVI as 'my poor uncle'. But would any of them, on their own merits, have, in Napoleon's expression, 'risen above the masses'? Pauline was cut out to become one of the great courtesans of French history but the rest were cut out to be nobodies, with the possible exception of Lucien. Without Napoleon we would never have heard of the others.

However, a descendant of the most worthless of them all, Jerome, is still a prince, and Bonapartist pretender to the throne of France. Princes too have been the descendants of Napoleon's brother-in-law, Joachim Murat, the inn-keeper's son, who was one of the greatest cavalry leaders in history. That, and his passion for swaggering in gorgeous uniforms designed by himself, was enough for success in those stirring days; and enough, or almost enough, for Napoleon, who mistrusted, and hampered the careers of popular or clever generals. He knew that an ass like Murat could never challenge his leadership.

Joseph, the oldest of the family, could have been a successful businessman, and in the end settled down as a nonentity in the United States of America. He accepted thrones from Napoleon, but had his pride and insisted on retaining his final title of King of Spain long after it had become meaningless. After his defeat at Vitoria and flight from Madrid, he did not greatly resent Napoleon's hysterical wrath, nor his order to the Minister of Police to arrest his elder brother if he came to Paris. Perhaps he was trying to get his own back when he tried to seduce Marie Louise whilst he was looking after her in Paris in 1814; but by that time it could be said that she 'seduced easily'.

Napoleon never quite forgot that Joseph was the head of the clan, but he summed him up contemptuously when he heard of the pretensions of this brother whom he had made a king, and a poor one at that: 'My senior – what, he? The heir to my father's vineyard I presume.' But he was deeply touched by Joseph's efforts, when the game was up, to persuade him to escape to America; (Joseph even offered to pose as the Emperor to help him to escape) and he was able to preserve tender memories of him in St Helena.

The third brother, Louis, owed more to Napoleon than any of them, for it was to him that Napoleon acted as a father in France, when he was twelve and Napoleon twenty-one, a young officer with his career still to make. To his great credit the penniless lieutenant scraped and saved to do all he could for his little

brother, even cooking for both of them. He was rewarded with a passionate adoration which only turned sour after Louis had become a melancholic suspicious-minded chronic invalid, afflicted by syphilis. Naturally he bitterly resented the rumours that Napoleon was the father of his own son. He resented too his brother's orders and interference in the government of his kingdom of Holland, from which he finally simply vanished leaving no address. He turned up in Töplitz to take the waters, vowing never to return to Holland. But his youthful worship of Napoleon had lasted long enough for Josephine to comment that Louis 'loved the Emperor as a lover loves his mistress'. Feminine intuition led her to support the belief that one of the troubles which clouded Louis' unbalanced mind was repressed homosexuality.

Lucien, the only one of Napoleon's four brothers who on his own might have become a ruler of France, would certainly not have made himself an emperor, for he was a dedicated democrat and opponent of dictatorship. Growing up after Napoleon had left the family home he could take an objective view of the brother who set the family pace. A letter which he wrote when only sixteen showed remarkable insight into Napoleon's character.[1] But, paradoxically, without Lucien, playing the part of Cromwell during the *Coup de Brumaire* in 1799, there might have been no First Consul, no Emperor. Family loyalty impelled him to support this brother who was already France's outstanding general and who, he could hope, would continue to be the strong right arm of a democracy which meant more to Lucien than to the rest of the Bonapartes. It had been Lucien's pro-French activities which had led to the family's flight from their native island in 1793, when Napoleon was still more Corsican than French. In 1801 Lucien got into hot water for publishing a pamphlet, *A Parallel between Caesar, Cromwell and Bonaparte*; but Napoleon knew a good man when he saw one; and a man who could speak to soldiers more effectively than Napoleon, even if it was only once, could not be overlooked.

Hoping to win his brother's support Napoleon promised: 'I will make you the greatest man in Europe – next to myself.' But Lucien was not prepared to pay the price of unquestioning obedience; and there was a still more impossible concession, in a field in which his achievements left the conquering hero far behind. In two happy marriages Lucien fathered eleven children. Napoleon had just been able to accept Lucien's first wife, the

unassuming little Christine Boyer, though he felt that Lucien had married beneath him as she was an inn-keeper's daughter. But his second wife, whom he married in defiance of Napoleon's dynastic pretensions, was quite unacceptable. She was a Madame Jouberthon whose husband had deserted her, and still worse she had been Lucien's mistress and had borne him an illegitimate child. At one meeting tempers became frayed when Napoleon told Lucien he was a fool to give up a throne for a trollop, and Lucien retorted: 'At least my one is young and pretty'. After this, reconciliation was impossible.

Lucien soon set sail for America, but was captured at sea, and spent four years in England, where he loyally refused to join his brother's enemies. He returned to France after Napoleon's first abdication; and at the end of the Hundred Days he supported Carnot who, surprisingly, advised Napoleon to put himself at the head of the Army, though most of the marshals would have none of this and were eager to be rid of him. Once again Lucien, most resolute of the Bonapartes, was ready to fight on when everyone had capitulated. With his burning republicanism and addiction to political speechifying he might have been a less pleasant companion than the easy-going Joseph, who alone among the brothers had inherited the placid temperament of their father. But he sounds a much nicer man than Napoleon and, under his mother's admirable rule that the child she loved the most was the one who was suffering most, he had a full share of her love, of which the self-sufficient Napoleon was deprived.

Every rule has its exception and Madame Mère forgot hers in the case of her Benjamin, the petted darling of the family, Jerome. He had little to suffer and was spoiled excessively with the usual result. He grew up into a fairly useless self-indulgent man, though relieved by a sense of humour, even a sense of the ridiculous, so lacking in that family, except for Pauline. Jerome longed to share Napoleon's glory but soon showed he had little taste for active service by deserting his post during the advance into Russia in 1812. He simply handed over his command and went home sulking. Of course he only held a command because he was Napoleon's brother and Russia unmanned better men than Jerome. Even Murat deserted the army but he at least waited until the later terrible days of the retreat.

In fairness to Jerome it can be said that he did at last gain some glory at Waterloo, though with questionable effects on the battle. It was the troops under his command who heroically pressed the

assaults on Hougomont, which were as heroically repulsed. Jerome thus drained away French reserves which might have turned the tide had they been available when a real soldier, Michel Ney, could have used them. But we cannot blame Jerome for this. The fault lay with his inactive and too detached brother, who of all men should have known when and where to use his reserves.

For Jerome Napoleon created the kingdom of Westphalia, but, by making him pay the French troops stationed in his territory and by demands for heavy contributions to the French treasury, helped to cause the chronic insolvency which clouded his reign. Jerome's dissolute extravagant conduct, and the comic-opera splendour of his court, infested with worthless favourites, earned him the hatred of his subjects and the contempt of Napoleon, who sneered that if the majesty of kings were printed on their faces, Jerome could safely go incognito.

Jerome may have been unable to resist his brother's demands for Westphalian money but the spinelessness with which he submitted to dictation about his marriage makes a feeble contrast to Lucien's robust independence. Whilst in the navy in 1803 he married a young American girl in Baltimore, Elizabeth (Betsy) Patterson. When Napoleon refused to recognise the marriage the weak-kneed Jerome repudiated his pregnant wife, who came to England and gave birth to her son in Camberwell. She named him Jerome Bonaparte and he became the founder of an American branch of the clan. Poor Betsy never abandoned her royal pretensions, and with every justification. Napoleon may have refused to recognise her marriage, but the Pope refused to annul it, so, in the eyes of the Church, Jerome's second marriage was invalid. But for all that this inconstant roué was the luckiest partner in all Napoleon's meddlesome marriage-making ventures. Princess Catherine of Württemberg was a charming loyal wife, who overlooked his occasional unfaithfulness and loved him devotedly until she died.

Elisa, the oldest and the most intelligent of Napoleon's three sisters was ambitious, hard and grasping. She married an insignificant Corsican noble, Pasquale Bacchiochi, and strove to make a name for herself as a patron of the arts and as an efficient ruler of the principalities given by Napoleon to her, rather than to her husband. She became hereditary Princess of Piombino, Lucca, and finally Grand Duchess of Tuscany; but she was selfish and did little for her benefactor, and deserted him when things went against him. She conspicuously lacked feminine charm; and Laure

Junot called her 'one of the most disagreeable women I ever met.'[2]

The most attractive of all the Bonapartes is the second sister Pauline – Paulette as Napoleon called her. She was near enough to him in age to be his companion from early youth. Beautiful and vivacious, she was lovable, loving, and of course far too much loved. She has been freely called a nymphomaniac, but a pleasanter description is that she was one of the *grandes amoureuses* of history. The rather absurd but descriptive term 'sex-kitten' fits her very well, and it is impossible not to succumb to her overwhelmingly feminine charm, warmth and generosity; just as it is hard to be too censorious about the flighty Josephine.

Pauline and Josephine, like many ladies of their period, had nothing to learn from the modern strip-tease girl. Emma Hamilton's famous 'attitudes' were a romanticised strip-tease act; and many prominent ladies of the First Empire can be seen to be well advanced into the early stages of the routine in their portraits, in which one breast coyly, or even two brazenly, protrude from transparent dresses for which *decolleté* is an anatomically inadequate adjective. In this field Pauline went still further and achieved immortality of a kind, when she commissioned the well-known reclining nude marble statue of herself by Canova. When asked if it had not been very unpleasant posing in the nude she replied: 'Why no – there was a fire in the room the whole time.'

Pauline was a flirt from an early age. She had affairs with Josephine's paramour Hippolyte Charles, and with an actor called Lafon. At one time she tried to carry on liaisons with three generals simultaneously – Moreau, Macdonald, and Beurnonville. They compared notes, and then each of them wrote a pretty stiff one to Pauline, which were all delivered by Beurnonville. Though her conduct was a trial to Napoleon at a time when he was trying to introduce strict moral codes, he does not seem to have been able to be too cross with her, but rather tried to get her to marry and settle down.

Junot wanted to marry her, but Napoleon prevented this, because Junot, though a staunch friend, had no money. Her strong attachment to Stanislas Fréron, the Commissioner for Southern France and later for San Domingo, was also discouraged, and she was finally married in 1797 to General Leclerc, gentle, kindly, passionately fond of her and luckily rich. She was fond of her handsome little husband, though she teased him unmercifully, and

he was really no match for a Bonaparte, though he liked to ape his brother-in-law's dress and manner, and his soldiers laughingly called him 'The blonde Bonaparte'.

When he was appointed to command the expedition to reconquer the island of San Domingo, dominated by rebellious slaves since 1792, his pleasure-loving wife had no wish to accompany him, and her instinct was sound, as she would have been less trouble had she stayed with their son Dermide in Paris. Napoleon is said to have insisted on her going; but another story tells of Laure Junot telling her how well she would look in Creole dress. Thereafter Paulette was full of animation, trying on improvised head-dresses, and no doubt planning social conquests whilst her husband suppressed the savage Dessalines. Well, it didn't work out like that. I think we can dismiss the tales of the general and Pauline enjoying themselves whilst their soldiers died. The heroic tales may have been exaggerated too, but it certainly sounds like Pauline that when an attack was impending she refused to take refuge in a ship, saying, 'You may go if you like. You are not sisters of a Bonaparte.'

When the expedition failed and Leclerc died of yellow fever, Pauline, like a true Corsican widow, cut off her hair and strewed it on his coffin. She had his body embalmed and brought him home to France. She also brought back a sore on her hand which refused to heal and kept recurring. Inevitably it was said to be caused by a venereal infection. The organism which causes cutaneous leishmaniasis, an oriental or tropical sore, had yet to be discovered, as had the treatment for it. If this was not the true nature of this sore it could have been a form of neurodermatitis, like Napoleon's skin troubles, for it was said to become worse when she was angry or frustrated. Dr Hallé, before quitting Napoleon's service in some dudgeon, had submitted a very frank report about Pauline's hysterical temperament.

Pauline simply had to have a husband, and she accepted Napoleon's nominee for the post too readily. Her second husband, Prince Camillo Borghese, was a personable young man and very wealthy, but for Pauline this was not nearly enough. The reason she gave for refusing to sleep with him was that he had bad breath. Candid friends did not hesitate to affirm that this was also the thorn on the rose that was Pauline. Her real reason was that the Prince was impotent, which was widely known among his acquaintances. Pauline herself said to Laure Junot: 'I would rather have remained the widow of General Leclerc with an income of

20,000 francs than have become the wife of a eunuch.'

In the circumstances it is hard to blame a woman like Pauline for the failure of the marriage, and her search for other diversions. The Borgheses seldom lived together, and Pauline even charged her husband rent when he stayed in her house. Suggestions that she frequently suffered from venereal infections were probably examples of the usual slanders to which the Bonapartes exposed themselves. The rumours may have been kept going because her share of the family hypochondria frequently drove her to doctors, or to take cures at various health resorts.

As I said in Chapter 4 she had one curious sexual deviation. She was a foot fetishist. Inordinately proud of her small feet she spent hours caring for and perfuming them, and her pedicure was often performed in public with the help of a page. She loved to caress the breasts of her ladies-in-waiting with her feet. This sent them into squeals of sensuous ecstasy; and it presumably 'did something' for Pauline.

Pauline was completely devoid of interest in political affairs, ambition, or intrigue. She was a lifelong worshipper of her brilliant brother. When he was in eclipse her devotion burned more brightly, and her life, her wealth and her jewels were his for the asking. She went with him to Elba, and tried her best to go to St Helena, and to plot his escape from there. No great man ever had a more devoted sister.

The youngest sister Caroline, christened Maria Annunziata, was even more ambitious than Elisa. If Elisa was the most intelligent Caroline was the cleverest. She was one of the hardest and most resolute of the Bonapartes, and as selfish as Napoleon. Talleyrand's verdict that she had 'the head of Cromwell on the body of a beautiful woman' recalls Napoleon's remark about their mother.

Caroline was not easy to live with, and from time to time separated from her husband Joachim Murat; but their separations were less permanent than those of her brother Louis or her sister Pauline. After briefly ruling the Grand Duchy of Berg the Murats became King and Queen of Naples, and Berg was given to Hortense's son.

Determined to retain or even improve her position this scheming self-reliant woman in the end pushed her weak vacillating husband into the final betrayal of her brother, his benefactor and old comrade-in-arms. Murat suffered agonising apprehensions of the verdict of public opinion on his desertion of the French Army which had made him what he was. Like many of

Napoleon's generals he could have found plenty of reasons for disliking him; and the interests of the country which Napoleon had set him to rule could provide political reasons to add to the personal ones. He succeeded in justifying his betrayal to himself and tried to do so in letters to Napoleon, without success, somewhat naturally, as Napoleon could not forgive Murat's description of his régime as 'criminal', as an excuse for joining the Allies in 1814. Napoleon's final verdict was 'Murat was never more than brave'. He had cause for bitterness for in one letter Murat committed the unforgiveable insult of referring to himself as 'the reanimator of your lost courage on the 18th Brumaire'.

This extraordinary remark may indicate that Murat was impelled by something more than the promptings of his wife's jealous hostility to her brother. His knowledge of his value to Napoleon as a soldier made him the more determined not to be just another cipher married to a Bonaparte, like Bacchiochi and Borghese. He hated to feel that he was a king only as Napoleon's brother-in-law. His military career had advanced along with Napoleon's. What one general could do another could at least attempt. In a remarkable outburst to the assembled generals at his headquarters at Posen, during the Retreat from Moscow, he had said that he could no longer serve under a madman, and went on to add that if he had accepted certain advances made by the English he would have himself been a monarch like the Emperor of Austria or King of Prussia.

He had always been a bit unbalanced, too excitable, lacking self-control; but it is interesting to speculate what might have been the result of his impact on the field of Waterloo, had Napoleon been able to overcome his distrust, as he overcame his distrust of Ney. Those repeated cavalry charges could hardly have been pressed with more resolution, but they could have been more intelligently directed. On his throne he was an irresolute waverer, most unlike the dashing cavalry leader who knew just when and where to strike. Poor Murat, in many ways a likeable man, made one last attempt after Napoleon's fall to emulate the master. He tried to stage his own return to his kingdom. But to 'his people' he could never mean what Napoleon, and even Murat himself, had meant to the French. So they executed him after only five of his attempted 'Hundred Days'. He made a typically flamboyant end, eyes unbandaged, commanding the firing squad: 'Soldiers, aim at my heart, but spare the face.'

The impact of Napoleon's family on his public life is neatly summed up in the title of Mr R.F. Delderfield's book about the brothers and sisters – *The Golden Millstones.* Napoleon would have been better served if he had made kings out of some of his marshals, and there were better men for the job than Murat, if Napoleon could have overcome his dislike and fear of strong and popular generals.

Napoleon's brothers shared the same genetic inheritance and family background, apart from the differing influences imposed on each child by its place in the family. It was a family background such as Freud believed is apt to make homosexual sons, and it seems to have had that effect on Napoleon and Louis. It would be unprofitable to speculate further about possible effects of shared family influences. Education for life in a civilised community cannot be entirely free from frustrations. Every child must have some of its desires thwarted, so traumatic experiences are the common lot. How we deal with these determines the kind of person we become. Men like Napoleon can 'seize destiny by the throat', as Beethoven put it.

Napoleon's brothers and sisters, eager to share his destiny, were united in only one aspect of it – their campaign to get rid of Josephine. In this they had at least half-hearted support from Napoleon, who swithered irresolutely between his need for an heir and his dependence on Josephine. He told his Minister of State, Count Champagny, that if he married again for reasons of state he would only be 'marrying a womb', for Josephine was his choice for a life companion.

In the hounding of Josephine, and characteristically it was the bitch pack which took the lead, Caroline was well to the fore. It was she who plotted the experimental liaison with Eléonore Denuelle to persuade Napoleon that he was capable of fatherhood. Napoleon's mother had disapproved of Josephine, even hated her for the things she said about Napoleon's potency, but she was not the woman to gloat over her final defeat. She even showed sympathy and so did the kindly Pauline, who knew what Josephine meant to Napoleon. She disapproved of his second marriage, and showed her feelings in a rude gesture when Marie Louise made her first state appearance in Brussels. For this she was rebuked by Napoleon and banished from Court.[3]

The possibility that one or more of Napoleon's sisters may have played an active part in his sexual life has been extensively debated. Madame de Rémusat wrote that Josephine believed that

Napoleon had 'seduced his sisters one after the other'. Rumours spread from France throughout Europe that he had committed incest with at least two of them, Pauline and Caroline; and this was openly alleged in one of those anonymous contemporary sources drawn upon by scurrilous pamphleteers like Lewis Goldsmith to denigrate the Bonapartes. This pamphlet, *A Secret History of the Cabinet of Bonaparte*, claimed that Pauline openly boasted of her illicit liaison. On one occasion it seems that she said: 'I am on excellent terms with my brother. I have slept with him twice'. Before going to join Napoleon in Elba she is said to have hinted that she could give him more than sisterly comfort.

Fouché, Napoleon's Minister of Police, assiduously spread the scandal of Pauline's incestuous relations with Napoleon; but it was Fouché's job to know everything about everybody, and his hobby to discover and to believe everything discreditable. Sir Walter Scott, though hostile to Napoleon, would have none of these rumours. He wrote: 'We reject, without weighing it, an accusation too hideous even to be mentioned, and which ought never to be breathed without the clearest proofs in support of it.'

Napoleon was far from indignant about similar rumours that he was the incestuous father of Hortense's son. Incest was said to be regarded by Corsicans in his day as not at all disgraceful or repugnant. But he had great regard for the reputation of his own family; and this scandal was probably just one of the unpleasant inventions of hostile propagandists, which anti-Bonapartist writers have never allowed to be forgotten.

Hostility to the family was kept alive by the unpopularity of Napoleon III, a pale shadow who tried most ineffectively to revive the glories of the Napoleonic era; and by the remarkable tendency of the descendants of Madame Mère's fantastic brood to throw up a series of freaks, frauds and perverts. A grand-daughter of Lucien, Studholmina Countess of Solms, who specialised in amorous involvements as did her mother Letitia, was convicted of homo-sexual perversion in 1892. She told a friend that she was bisexual, adding that it was hereditary as her aunts Elisa, Caroline and Pauline were similarly constituted.

But, however 'constituted' Napoleon's sisters may have been, it is rather on account of his own character that the allegations of incest seem unconvincing. There was no love lost between Napoleon and Caroline even before she betrayed him. Pauline, for all her love and admiration of her wonderful brother, was quite capable of opposing, criticising and bantering him. I cannot

imagine the weakly sexed Napoleon, plagued as he was by fears of impotence, risking failure and derision in a field about which he was so very sensitive, by trying conclusions with these strongly sexed sisters.

If Napoleon did sleep with his sisters he did not talk about it, as did Lord Byron, who wrecked the happiness of his half-sister Augusta, not so much by committing incest as by inability to keep his mouth shut. Unfortunately, as we have already seen, Napoleon was less discreet about the rumours that he was the father of his step-daughter's first son. Poor Hortense was no Corsican and her distress when she heard of the scandal from Napoleon himself, her disgust at his complacency that rumour should credit him with being a father, and her horror that she could be thought capable of such conduct, have the ring of genuine innocence. Constant, who liked to think that he knew all about his master's amours, poured scorn on the story and assured us that Napoleon 'never for one moment cherished the base desires attributed to him by his detractors'. If we can believe Madame de Rémusat, Napoleon rather than loving Hortense 'held her in reverence', which makes it easier to accept Constant's assurance, rather than to believe Napoleon capable of venting 'base desires' on a young girl under his special protection, for which it would be hard to forgive him.[4]

Unlike some of the Bonapartes Eugène and Hortense Beauharnais repaid all that Napoleon did for them with lifelong loyalty, and he seems to have had very kindly, albeit typically selfish feelings for them. He was aghast when, after he divorced Josephine, Hortense told him that she and her brother would leave France with their mother. Her supremely self-centred stepfather exclaimed: 'What! You are never going to desert me.' It never occurred to him that the wife he had discarded would not still be around to entertain and comfort him, with her children in attendance on their imperial protector. And that, of course, is how it all turned out. Eugène stayed on as Viceroy of Italy, a position he would hardly have won had he not been the Emperor's stepson; but, as the son of an able young general and having grown up under Napoleon's military wing, he could hardly fail to become a fine soldier. In 1812, towards the end of the soul-destroying retreat from Moscow, after Murat's defection, Eugène commanded the main body of the army and rose to the challenge resolutely.

Unselfish, generous and genuinely attached to his stepfather, Eugène was a thoroughly delightful man against whom no word of

reproach, no hint of anything abnormal or dishonourable has ever been heard. Well – it has to be admitted that there was talk of a possible mistress named Seraphine; but Eugène deserves most of the credit for making a supremely happy marriage out of one of Napoleon's typical meddlesome marriage plots, which had involved taking Eugène's bride, Princess Amalie Augusta of Bavaria, (always called Auguste) away from the Crown Prince of Baden to whom she had been promised. As a consolation prize Napoleon awarded him Stephanie de Beauharnais, whom he had himself tried to seduce. Stephanie who had been scolded by Josephine for permitting Napoleon's advances, was disgusted at being used as a pawn in these schemes, and refused to consummate her marriage and spent her wedding night with a girl friend.

Princess Auguste had also been violently opposed to this arranged marriage, and Prince Eugène gallantly offered her the chance of backing out, volunteering to take all the blame on himself. But his charm and gentle courtesy soon made the political marriage a love match which lasted for life.

Hortense's fate was very different, although Napoleon obviously acted with the best of intentions towards her. Two generals to whom he would have liked to marry her were friends of whom he had the highest opinion. One was Duroc, whom Constant and de Bourrienne believed she loved sincerely; but he refused to marry her. The other, a member of the old nobility, was General Desaix de Vergoux, who was killed at Marengo. In giving Hortense in marriage to his brother Louis, Napoleon must have been hoping to benefit two people of whom he was fond, and could hardly have foreseen that he was condemning Hortense to a life of misery. Neither of them loved the other. Louis loved Emile de Beauharnais, whom Napoleon gave to Count Antoine de Lavallette. Emilie at least came well out of the transactions for she did not love Louis who by then had become the least attractive of the Bonapartes, and was said to have been infected with syphilis. Napoleon could not have known this, nor did he know that Lucien had convinced Louis that Hortense had become Napoleon's mistress. Poor Louis was thus prepared to believe that his omnipotent brother was the father of the first son of his marriage, whom Napoleon adopted as his heir.

Little wonder that Hortense's querulous, self-pitying, lugubrious memoirs record an unhappy life. It would be unfair to blame Napoleon for all her troubles. She seems to have been fated to be involved in scandal. Her own father denied that she was his child.

It was generally supposed that her husband Louis Bonaparte was not the father of her second son, later to be Napoleon III. Of the candidates for that honour the most widely favoured was a Dutch admiral named Verhuell. After her wretched marriage ended in separation in 1812 she had a romance with young Charles de Flahaut,[5] for whose affections Caroline Bonaparte was at one time a rival. Hortense liked to call her affair with de Flahaut a morganatic marriage, and it was generally accepted as such, so much so that the son she bore to de Flahaut was created Duc de Morny and rode beside his half-brother Napoleon III at the beginning of the Second Empire, during which he became a leading statesman.

Hortense's love and loyalty to Napoleon lightened a little the story of her sad life. After his final abdication she welcomed and comforted him at Malmaison, scorning suggestions that she would thus forfeit the favour of the Bourbons and of the Tsar Alexander, who had been a good friend to her mother. She wrote: 'I would never have abandoned the man whom I called my father. The hour of his misfortune was the hour for me to manifest my gratitude to him.' Eugène's unselfish loyalty to Napoleon is particularly praiseworthy for he had much to lose. It would have been in his best interests to join the Sixth Coalition against Napoleon in 1813 and 1814, but, when everyone was deserting France, Eugène remained constant. He had been secretly offered the crown of Sweden before Bernadotte was approached.

Now he could have had the kingdom of Italy if he had abandoned Napoleon. He felt that his children had a right to royal status, for they were a king's grandchildren; but, even for their sake, he would not desert France, as the upstart Murat had done. He broke off diplomatic relations with his father-in-law the King of Bavaria, and wrote to his wife: 'I'll never be king at that price.'

Even Napoleon's enemies have always recognised his formidable power of charming human hearts. He hardly needed to exert this magnetism in the case of his step-children. Josephine, who adored them, cannot ever have spoken ill of their own father, for they always spoke of him with affection and pride; and with the same generosity she may have kept from her children most of what she knew of the evil side of her second husband.

But there must have been something quite exceptional about this remarkable man to create such indissoluble bonds between him and the children of a woman whom he had treated so much less kindly than he probably wished to do.

CHAPTER XII

PERSONALITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

Although Dr Praetorius, in his article written in 1921 which is referred to in Chapter 8, concluded from the evidence available to him that Napoleon was probably not homosexual, he commended the study of the sex lives of great men as a work of real importance because of the powerful influence of the sexual instinct upon human nature, particularly when there is any suggestion of homosexuality with its special emotional pressures and the social difficulties to which it may lead.

A balance must be struck between the tendency of some writers, especially those who are themselves homosexual, to throw their net too widely, and to include in this category on rather slender evidence many great names, especially in the world of art; and on the other hand the natural, and often laudable, reaction of those who may not have studied the evidence very carefully to dismiss most of such suggestions as the malicious chatter of evil and salacious minds.

The American critic Susan Sontag recently asserted that: 'Jews and homosexuals are the outstanding creative minorities in contemporary urban culture'. (*Notes on 'Camp'*. No. 51) Since it became permissible to write about and refer to homosexuality in respectable society the list of men in whom this trait was perceptible has been augmented with almost monotonous frequency, but it is well to remember that this is no new fad. Dante was among the first to draw attention to the fact that homosexuality is common in men of genius or outstanding ability.

The best-known examples among great artists are Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci (recently 'posthumously psycho-analysed' by Dr K.R. Eissler) and among musicians a well-recognised case is Tchaikovsky. Karl Jung believed that, although it is possible to draw inferences about an artist from his work, these inferences are never conclusive. 'There is nothing in the *Ring of the Nibelungs* that would enable us to recognise or definitely infer the fact that

Wagner occasionally liked to wear womanish clothes,' he wrote; but 'hidden connections exist between the heroic masculine world of the Nibelungs and a certain pathological effeminacy in the man Wagner.' It may have been significant that Wagner was the favoured composer of the Nazi leadership, believed to have been considerably tainted by homosexuality (and in this connection even a doctor may perhaps be allowed to use an emotive adjective).

In the field of literature it might seem that Wilhelm Stekel goes too far when he suggests that because Goethe, in *Erlkönig*, 'has beautifully exposed a boy's homosexual fantasy' it represents his own discharge of such suppressed ideas.

The fact that homosexuality often coexists with the artistic temperament implies that the deviation calls for some repression of the sexual instinct, of which the driving force may then be directed into 'respectable' channels, so that homosexual individuals of good character retain their self-respect, and find self-justification and realisation of their ambitions by striving to excel in various fields of endeavour – artistic, cultural or philanthropic. It is recognised that men with repressed homosexual tendencies may choose such careers as the armed forces and the teaching profession, or devote themselves to work with boys' clubs and similar organisations, leading chaste and useful lives, helped by the sublimation of the driving force of the sexual instinct.

Some psychologists believe that true sublimation is attained very rarely, perhaps only in the dedicated priest. Whatever may be the truth of this it is probable that many men have been enabled to make a success of their lives' work by some such deep-seated driving force, of which many of them may have been more or less unaware. It would be fruitless to carry such speculations too far, and especially to allow homosexual writers to claim that their deviation is a desirable thing in the cause of art. The impulse of more normal emotions must be every bit as strong.

When sexual deviation affects those who are born to be rulers of men, or those who may seize power for themselves, it is not only a personal concern but may complicate the lives of others and even trouble the world. Sir Richard Burton's list of homosexual monarchs, in addition to Napoleon, included Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Henri III, Louis XIII and Louis XVIII of France, William II of Holland, Frederick the Great and Peter the Great. Homosexual kings of England, as well as Dutch William, were William II whose court was a resort of perverts, Edward II and

Richard I. The theme of Norah Loft's novel *The Lute Player* is Richard's homosexual friendship with Blondel. If Napoleon had known of this he might have been even less amused than he was by the efforts of a German scholar called Ritterstein to prove that Blondel's real name was Buonaparte, and that he was an ancestor of Napoleon. Poor Berengaria's married life seems to have been a complete fraud. Perhaps it was his inaptitude for family life which sent the Lion Heart restlessly crusading; and, when Alexander the Great lamented that there were no more worlds to conquer, his boredom may have been made more unbearable by failure to conquer in a field in which lesser men were more successful – that of women's hearts.

Homosexuality, then, may in some cases be a spur to artistic development, and has driven some men to make war successfully, others to become bullying aggressive dictators. A good reason for wanting to prevent, or if possible to cure, this and other deviations is that, more often than not, they lead to unhappiness. Sex education, from which not long ago parents and teachers recoiled in embarassment, is now directed at the young from many angles and in various forms, many remarkably free from prudery. Parents, and even schoolmasters, are now sensible and enlightened in this rôle, which however is still not entirely free from difficulty.

Army experience suggests that there will still be young men who, for various reasons, some of them like the factors in Napoleon's life which I have described, will misunderstand themselves; believe that they are 'undersexed', an expression which they often use; and may drift unnecessarily into homosexuality or other deviations. They need to learn that anxieties which seem so personal and secret, even unique to themselves, should be brought to a doctor. And it might be said that medical education must ensure that even young and inexperienced doctors can give sound counsel in such matters.

Even today, when interest in sex, and the desire to instruct the young, amount almost to an obsession, the path to sexual adaptation, from infancy through childhood and adolescence, can be like the voyage of Hans Andersen's Steadfast Tin Soldier down the gutter. There are still drains for his paper boat to circumnavigate, and big fish to swallow him. But the opinions of psychologists and others who warn us of the perils of the voyage are probably coloured by their experiences with the ship-wrecked few. Somehow or other most of the paper boats survive the turbulent gutter and reach the placid lower reaches of the river before

bobbing off on the still potentially stormy sea of marriage and family life. Somehow babies contrive to get born without the help of the B.B.C.

Prevention of sexual repression might not protect society from the rise of some new dictator, though it could help to remove at least one potent cause of cruelty and prevent some of the sadistic assaults of which we read too frequently. But aggression is part of the heritage of all creatures and a spate of books, articles and television programmes has inundated us with reminders that Man, 'The Naked Ape', is not only one of the most aggressive of species, but, because of his unique 'advantages', also one of the most destructive. But surely The Naked Ape has something more. He is alone, or nearly alone, in his willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of the tribe, or more specifically for his comrades. He has the gift of comradeship. All right-minded people must share Lady Wootton's hope that some day we may celebrate 'the Year in which no one was killed on purpose'. Survivors of war could never be war mongers, but their sundial minds tend to record only the bright side, the comradeship and self-sacrifice; and they know just what General Patton meant when he said: 'War is the supreme test of man in which he rises to heights never approached in any other activity.' Now that we must hope that the nuclear threat has outlawed major war outlets must be found for man's aggression and lust for conquest.

A popular outlet today seems to be demonstration-fever; and the ferocity and even, in some lands, the steadiness under fire, of anti-war demonstrators suggest that they would make fine soldiers, hair-cut or no hair-cut. This is a less dangerous safety-valve than our roads, where the aggressive competitive driver – usually male except at the time of day when typists in their mini-cars are bursting to beat the boss to the office – makes his contribution to the annual butcher's bill of some seven thousand killed and three hundred thousand injured in this battle of the road. The finest outlet is of course in adventure, encouraged by the Duke of Edinburgh, the armed services and other organisations.

Still the fear must remain that somewhere in the world, in the mind of some misunderstood child, misunderstanding himself perhaps, mental processes could be germinating such as those which produced Napoleon or Hitler. Richard Serjeant (the pen-name of an English surgeon), in his book *The Spectrum of Pain*, observes that 'Power in the hands of psychopaths is one of the most dangerous influences in the world.' He goes on to say:

> . . . the majority of people under normal conditions have no conscious wish to hurt or quarrel with their neighbours. Their tendency to do so under powerful leadership does show that deep instincts are easily aroused, and the clear inference is that our leaders should be selected with the very greatest care. The ridiculous ease with which any plausible power-mad psychopath can take over control of groups, unions, parties, and entire countries is the kind of atavistic lunacy that needs urgent attention; it will certainly continue so long as rulers spring from political upstarts and the more bombastic members of the armed forces.*

As a consulting surgeon the author has of course sound advice to offer about treatment and prevention. His hopes that some day the answer may lie in 'a combination of ultra-hypnosis and micro-surgical manipulation of chromosomes' may sound like Science-fiction, but it might be rash to dismiss them lightly in this age of breath-taking scientific achievements. As things are at present, however, he is clearly right to stress the importance of education, saying that 'The problems of devising and running a system of teaching that will conquer cruelty are formidable indeed, but eventually they will have to be overcome'; and this can only be expected when teaching is 'one of the most highly trained and best paid professions in the world, with scrupulous selection and screening of those privileged to guide the young.'

Plausible power-made psychopaths . . . political upstarts . . . more bombastic members of the armed forces – Napoleon is the supreme example of all these, and the most interesting, and even perhaps the most attractive of them all. So great that we never bother to call him 'The Great'; his final failure adding to the lustre of his Legend, as it gave him time to work at it, to polish it, and to entrust it to faithful apostles for future embellishment. His life ended in profound unhappiness, crystallised in that poignant outburst: 'Do you think I have no bad moments when I lie awake and think what I was – and what I am?'

The historical importance of those five and a half years in St Helena does not lie in the sordid and pitiful story of his petty quarrels with the Governor, the strange goings-on in his tawdry little court, or the visible decay of his intellect, but in the use which he deliberately made of his terrible situation to consolidate his place in the affection of the French people, and in history. As

**The Spectrum of Pain*, Richard Serjeant. Rupert Hart Davis London 1969.

he approached the end of his wonderful saga he withdrew more and more within himself, striving to see himself as he hoped history would see him. Most of his time was spent in talking about himself and dictating his own version of his life story. He contrived to persuade himself that his defeat could be made to contribute to his glory:

> Misfortunes also have their heroism and their glory. My career lacked adversity. If I had died on the throne, in the clouds of my omnipotence I would have remained incomplete for many people. Today, thanks to misfortune, I can be judged for what I really am.

Now that adversity had come the use he made of it was far from honest. The American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) roundly denounced Napoleon; 'the boundless liar' whose Bulletins were 'proverbs for saying what he wished to be believed; and worse, he sat in his premature old age in his lonely island, coldly falsifying facts, and dates and characters, giving to history a theatrical éclat.' It is a pity that this judgement is well-merited because there was so much that needed no bending of the truth or meretricious gloss.

Instead of suffering a gradual decline in power and influence in France, Napoleon was swept away in a storm of tragedy which engulfed also the French people, yet left them with cherished gleams of glory to soothe their battered national pride. Although the country lay prostrate in defeat and surrender the words which rang in their hearts were: 'The Guard dies but it does not surrender!'[1] And how high Napoleon had raised their pride before its fall. To be a Frenchman and especially a French soldier must have seemed the greatest thing on Earth. As Count Vandal said, Napoleon for a time lifted Frenchmen above mankind. In St Helena Napoleon's self-appointed task was to assure them that all was not lost, that it had all been worthwhile. He fabricated a cloak of respectability to clothe the Napoleonic era in untarnishable glory and, incidentally, to justify and glorify dictatorship in general. Hitler and his accomplice Mussolini were luckily not given time to justify their Napoleonic pretensions.

Although the English hated Napoleon as cordially as they were later to hate Hitler our acceptance of the Napoleonic Legend – of Lord Rosebery's 'Napoleon of our preconceptions' – makes it quite distasteful to compare the two dictatorships. Yet there are

certain inescapable similarities. Napoleon's France sounds very like Hitler's Germany. Everyone had to have a uniform and, unlike the British who can hardly wait to get into plain clothes, everyone loved to wear uniform at all times, not only military men but civilians. Wellington wore plain clothes in battle and, in the Peninsula, like General Montgomery in the Western Desert, he hardly worried what his soldiers wore, so long as their weapons were in good order.

One officer wrote that one hardly ever saw 'the old red rag' – i.e. correct uniform, in the Peninsula. But the French soldiers, booted and spurred and in the most gorgeous uniforms lorded it not only over the conquered peoples but over civilians in France, pushing them into the gutter and behaving with great licence. Wellington had to rebuke his officers for duelling and rowdy behaviour, such as jumping on to the stage in the theatre in Lisbon and annoying the audience. But they did not ill-treat or despise, still less kill civilians, and their compatriots would never have put up with such conduct, not being a militant race, unlike the French to whom military Glory – the word really need a capital letter, meant everything. Count Alfred de Vigny, the poet and author who joined a French Royalist regiment just before Napoleon's return from Elba, compared peacetime soldiering to the boredom of incarceration in the belly of the Wooden Horse, waiting to leap out in Troy.

The French like exciting warlike rulers who will give them victories, and Napoleon understood this; and said: 'The French require a prince to be active, enterprising and courageous, and above all to take them robbing abroad.'

Though he may have spoken with a smile this is just what he did. He leaped straight from the Wooden Horse into legend. The thrill of his early victories in Italy, the pictures of the strange, long-haired, foreign-looking young general heroically crossing the bridge at Arcola, leading the Republican armies to triumph after triumph, helped by his genius for publicity, spoke more clearly to French hearts than the grief of the widows and orphans. Later when the demands of conscription became ever more insistent, when mere boys were called to the colours, parents arrested as hostages for their sons, collective punishments inflicted on villages for a single deserter – then it was too late. Press censorship and the whole sickening apparatus of dictatorship suppressed opposition, though it remained as an undercurrent. In the theatre any covert criticism of the regime which had escaped the censor's,

notice was hailed with rapture, just as we are told it is under modern totalitarian rule. Yet Napoleon could disregard all this. By his staggering achievements, his magnetic personality and driving-force, he had compelled his former equals or superiors, even his rivals, to work for him – for a foreigner adopted by the French people as their leader. He had made the nation overwhelmingly powerful with a strong and efficient government, a capable administrative service covering the whole country, and a code of laws accepted by other countries as the basis of their own system of justice.

By right of his achievements he ruled the persons of thirty-six million subjects, and the hearts of the great majority of them, particularly the soldiers and the young, for whom his rapid rise was an encouragement to their own ambition – the stimulus of the baton in the knapsack. As for those who had achieved the baton, he well knew that his career might encourage higher ambitions, and he kept a wary eye on any who might try to emulate him. Not wary enough. He was shaken by the measure of success of General Malet's conspiracy in 1812; especially because, when Napoleon's death in Russia was announced, no-one thought of crying '*Vive Napoleon II*!' Bitterly he said: 'I am forced to admit that all I have built is fragile.'

Only two years later his son had been taken from France to Austria, never to return, and his second wife had deserted him for her lover Neipperg. This was his bitterest memory – 'To be a Corsican, and to forgive such an outrage!'

The strongest impression left by Napoleon's life in St Helena is his isolation. His valets gave him simple unselfish service to the end, acting as nursing orderlies in his painful terminal illness. But the members of his drab little court were weary of him. Las Cases, Gourgaud and Madame Montholon escaped. The Bertrands wanted to follow them but Napoleon forbade it, even after he had transferred his confidence from his grand marshal and friend of over fifteen years to the newcomer, Montholon, who longed to follow his wife to France, and has even been suspected of trying to poison Napoleon, to secure his legacy and his freedom. Bertrand, whose disillusionment and ultimate dislike of Napoleon were not to be revealed for nearly a hundred and thirty years, summed up the feelings of them all when he said sadly to Gourgaud: 'The Emperor is what he is, we cannot change his character. It is because of that character that he has no friends, that he has many enemies, and indeed that we are at St Helena.'

Long ago Napoleon had said that he felt the isolation of his position because his rise above the masses had been too rapid. Now it was too late to make friends – real friends to whom he could turn for comfort, in whom he could confide instead of dictating to them. In him the loneliness of high command reached its highest pitch. A nation had looked to him for leadership, many thousands of them worshipping him and desiring no other god. To whom then could he turn but to God? It is a manifestation of the herd instinct that all individuals need someone to look up to – a leader, a final arbiter for whose approval they can strive. Napoleon had raised himself so high above mankind that the only approval for which he could strive was that of God. When he spoke of the isolation of his position he added that he had had to throw out anchors for his salvation. It has generally been assumed that he was alluding only to his relatives and supporters; but perhaps he really hoped for a sheet anchor in religious faith. He knew that the beliefs instilled in his childhood could not be entirely cast out, and, although he often expressed disbelief in Christianity, which he said his intellect compelled him to reject, he admitted that he sought to find religious faith because of man's need of something outside himself.

Towards the end of his life he confessed that, like his heroes Alexander, Caesar and Charlemagne, he had founded his empire on force whereas 'Jesus Christ founded His empire on love, and at this hour millions of men would die for Him.' And again: 'An extraordinary power of commanding men has been given to Alexander, Charlemagne and myself. But with us the presence has been necessary, the eye, the voice, the hand. Whereas Jesus Christ his influenced and commanded His subjects without His visible presence for eighteen hundred years.'

Those who hold that Napoleon was an unbeliever who made public profession of faith only when it suited his political ends may be doing him an injustice. Religious faith might have cured him of the egotism which was the central tragedy of his life.

Tsar Alexander I of Russia, Napoleon's enemy who became his sentimentally devoted friend, forgave the rupture of their friendship and said that he pitied Napoleon if he could love nobody. My own study of the great man, begun in hostility, has ended in sympathy. Having placed Napoleon at about the centre of the spectrum of sex I have gravitated to that position in the spectrum of sympathy.

The last paragraph in Professor Pieter Geyl's book *Napoleon*

For and Against begins: 'We know that the argument is going merrily on.' Mindful of C.S. Forester's warning that where Napoleon is concerned one can only form one's own conclusions about him, one cannot hope to form those of others, I know that many readers will not share my views; but they may enjoy the argument and help to keep it going merrily on.

NOTES

Chapter 1
THE COMPLEX CHARACTER OF NAPOLEON

1. He never forgot Muiron. He chose the frigate *Muiron* to sail from Egypt to France in 1799. And at the end of his career it was as Colonel Muiron, or Colonel Duróc, that he hoped to be allowed to settle in England.

2. Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Charbonnière de Bourrienne, 1769-1834: schoolfriend of N. at Brienne; was his private secretary from 1797 to 1802, when he left after being accused of financial dishonesty, which he always denied and which cannot have been serious as he was given an official post in Hamburg, where he was again accused of embezzlement. After N.'s fall he was in financial trouble yet again whilst a Minister of State under the Bourbons. He died insane. Though dishonest in financial matters he was a man of ability and valued as such by N. It seems that N. and Bourrienne never quite outgrew their school friendship. After one row de Bourrienne presumed upon this by publicly telling the First Consul that he was a bigger fool than his secretary. Even after that N. persuaded him to resume his duties, asking him if he was 'still in the sulks', and thinking he was overworked gave him an assistant, de Méneval, later principal secretary, and the author of more voluminous and much more sycophantic memoirs. De Bourrienne's memoirs have been condemned by Bonapartists, annoyed by his frankness and candid criticisms of the man he knew so well, and their accuracy has been doubted because of the belief that parts of them were written or added to by other authors.

3. General Armand Augustin Louis de Caulaincourt, Duke of Vicenza, four years younger than N., was his aide-de-camp at the time of the execution of the Duke of Enghien. To the end of his life he denied complicity in that crime, to which some had ascribed his rapid promotion. This was really due to N's affection for him and his faith in his skill in diplomacy. N. freely discussed his most intimate feelings with Caulaincourt, who could always talk to N. with unusual freedom. He warned N. that the bloodshed he caused would cost him his throne; and he opposed the Russian campaign, in which his younger brother was killed. He was with N. throughout his return journey to France from Russia in 1812, and rejoined the Emperor after his return from Elba, becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs during the Hundred Days.

4. N. tried to justify his action to some extent by pointing out that French prisoners of the Turks and

Arabs were sometimes mutilated or sexually assaulted before being killed. In a curious interview with a young soldier, whom he had picked out from a batch of returned prisoners because of something in his manner, he made light of the man's weeping admissions that he had been subjected to compulsory sodomy. 'Great dolt, that's nothing to make so much fuss about! Thank Heaven that you got off so lightly. Come now, stop crying and answer me.' (*Grand benêt, te voila bien malade! Ne voila-t-il pas une grande affaire? Remercie le Ciel d'en être quitté a si bon marché. Allons, ne pleur plus et réponds moi.*) N's irritable bantering of the unhappy soldier arose from his desire to get information about the enemy camp; but the soldier could only say that 'from the position he was in it was impossible to see anything.' Monsieur Breton predictably adds that he 'covered his behind with his hands.' It is hard to say just how an officer should deal with a soldier in such a predicament, but to laugh it off as a matter of small consequence denotes deplorable callousness, if nothing worse.

5. Even that most humane general Sir John Moore was unable to dispense with corporal punishment. It is nauseating to read, in soldiers' memoirs of those days, repeated descriptions of brutal floggings from which many men died. It is humiliating to know that British officers used such methods. But the soldiers themselves did not believe that discipline could be maintained without the 'cat', and often approved of its use. Indeed intelligent diarists attributed their success to a flogging in their early service, just as many autobiographers to this day describe with almost masochistic relish beatings at school for which they claim beneficial effects. Foreigners assure us that they get good results without the cane; and in their textbooks of psychology describe flagellation as 'the English vice'. In N's day corporal punishment was used in all European armies, and when Wellington was asked if the French really did without it he said: 'Oh, they bang them about very much with ramrods and that sort of thing, and then – they shoot them.' He explained that our methods of recruiting made for a different type of army than that resulting from the general conscription in France. General Foy praised the heroic stubborn endurance and discipline of our troops, but said that we lacked 'the strong sympathy between the leaders and the soldiers, the paternal care of the captains, the simple manners of the subalterns, and the affectionate fellow feeling in danger and suffering which constituted the strength of the Revolutionary Armies of France'. On such a foundation it hardly needed N.'s genius to build an army of unsurpassed morale and fighting spirit.

6. General Baron Gaspard Gourgaud; 1783-1852; an artilleryman, wounded at Austerlitz; became one of N's aides-de-camp or orderly officers (*officiers d'ordonnance*) in 1811, served with him in Russia in 1812, and rejoined him for the Hundred Days. He was one of those allowed to accompany N. to St Helena. Fanatically devoted to the Emperor, it was however rumoured that he became a Royalist spy in 1814. He criticised Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon* so sharply that Sir Walter said that if Gourgaud wanted to fight he would not run away from him. Gourgaud was one of those who went to St Helena to bring N.'s body back to France in 1840.

7. Jonathan Wild the Great, an early eighteenth century scoundrel, the subject of novels by Defoe and

Fielding, was described as a coward, hypocrite and tyrant, unrelieved by human feeling and never betrayed into a kind or good action – in fact very much Henri Guillemin's portrait of *Napoléon Tel Quel*: and one to some extent endorsed by Sigmund Freud who wrote to Arnold Zweig, 15th July 1934, about Napoleon – that he was 'blessed by incredible good luck, inhibited by no ties apart from his family and made his way through life like a sleepwalker until he was finally shipwrecked by his *folie de grandeur*. There scarcely ever was a genius so totally lacking in distinction, an absolutely classic "Anti-Gentleman".' (These words are in English in the original.) *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig*, The Hogarth Press, 1970.

Wellington's respect for the general never blinded him to the defects of the man. In his day the gap between the officer, who was a gentleman, and the 'common soldier' who was not, was a wide one in our army, and still wider in the Russian and Prussian armies.

8. The *Coup de Brumaire*, 1799 – 9th, 10th November, or 18, 19 Brumaire in the Revolutionary calendar – was a military *coup d'état* to overthrow the Republic. N., having left his army in Egypt (for which there had been talk of having him impeached, even shot) had hurried straight to Paris, defying the quarantine laws, and had become the leader of the plot. In this dangerous situation, at a critical point in the *coup*, and in his own career, his self-confidence wavered whilst he was addressing the hostile Council of Five Hundred in the Orangery at St Cloud. The stream of his eloquence dried up, he became incoherent and, after being jostled and man-handled he lost consciousness in one of the strange seizures which overcame him in moments of stress. Soldiers carried him half-fainting from the Orangery whilst the deputies cried 'Outlaw him' – *Hors la loi* – that dread cry which had sent Robespierre on the road to the guillotine. It was Lucien who, as chairman of the meeting, calmed the deputies and rallied the soldiers who, with drums beating and bayonets lowered drove the deputies out of the Orangery. The Consulate was then established with three consuls, N. becoming First Consul.

9. De Vigny may have based this story, in his classic *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires*, on the actual experience of young Etienne St Denis, later known as Ali, who was listening outside the door. He could hear N's voice frequently raised in appeal to *Santo Padre*, but the Pope's voice was too low for him to hear a word of his contributions to the conversation.

10. *Undaunted* took N. to Elba, and, before he disembarked, the boatswain on behalf of the ship's company, wished him 'long life and prosperity on the island of Elba, and better luck another time'.

11. Even more deplorable, because of its fatal consequences, was N.'s treatment of Admiral Bruix at Boulogne in 1804. The Admiral had refused to send some ships to sea on an invasion exercise because of a threatening storm. It was nothing to the storm which then broke over the Admiral's head, at the climax of which N. menaced him with his riding whip, and Bruix, to the horror of the bystanders, laid his hand on his sword. N. calmed down, ordered Bruix to leave Boulogne within twenty-four hours and personally sent the ships to sea. More than twenty guard boats filled with soldiers ran aground, whereupon N. himself leaped into a lifeboat, crying

to those who tried to hold him back, 'Hands off! Hands off! We must save them somehow'. More than two hundred bodies were washed ashore next day. This was the only time in his career when he was publicly defied, and aware of the effect it could have on his reputation he sent agents into the town and camp, silencing the rumours with gifts of gold. It was not the only occasion on which soldiers' lives were sacrificed to his vanity and inability to admit a mistake.

Chapter 2
NAPOLEON AND THE DOCTORS

1. Dr Wardner. D. Ayer, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* for May 1966 makes a good case for his belief that N.'s urinary symptoms and various other disorders, including his liver trouble, could have been caused by schistosomiasis, with which he might have become infected in Egypt in 1798-1799. This disease, was known to British soldiers as 'Bill Harris', from its alternative name of Bilharziasis.

2. Use of the adjective does not justify the diagnosis of 'sexual infantilism' which has been made by some medical writers. Mr Cronin, (*Napoleon*, William Collins, 1971) though quoting Freud's opinion that N. 'remained fixated on his puberty phantasies', rightly rejects this diagnosis, which implies 'the continuance of childish traits and development beyond puberty; the persistence of infantile characteristics into adult life' – hardly applicable to a man who, in some respects, could be said to have leaped into adulthood about the age of 15.

3. Another possibility is that N.'s hypogonadism could have been due to hepatic failure, if his liver trouble had been of long duration, and not, as I believe, an illness of his St Helena days. Chronic liver trouble could have been the cause of his gynecomastia (womanly breasts) and, in association with his tendency to digestive disorders and constipation, could have led to the prolapsed piles, which are said to have caused him to sit astride a kitchen chair at Waterloo, instead of bestriding his white charger, as painters of battle pictures prefer to show him.

Chapter 3
SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCES

1. One of the many curious anonymous books published during or soon after N.'s lifetime purports to be extracts from his own writings selected by an officer of his household. *A History of the Amours of Napoleon Bonaparte*, Paris 1816. It mentions traumatic experiences in his childhood, such as seeing Paoli having intercourse with his godmother; attempts by an elderly lady to seduce him when he was a cadet; and at the same period an encounter with two young ladies engaged in lesbian practices.

2. Freud also considered that N.'s character was influenced by being a second son. Writing on 6th November 1934 to Arnold Zweig he said: 'Napoleon had a tremendous Joseph complex . . . he had to marry a woman called Josephine. His overwhelming jealousy of his elder brother had been transferred into warm love under the influence of his father identification, and the obsession was then transferred to his wife. Incorrigible dreamer that he was he had to play the rôle of Joseph in Egypt, and later on provided for his

brothers in Europe, just as though he had been successful in his conquest of Egypt.' (From the letters of *Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig*, The Hogarth Press, 1970.) Freud developed this theme at greater length in a letter to Thomas Mann on 29th November 1936. Similar, partly unconscious, striving to excel an older brother may have been at the root of Lucien's dislike of N.

3. The French unit of measurement before France converted to the metric system was the *pied de roi*, which was 0.324 of a metre, compared with the *pied anglais*, the English foot, at 0.305 of a metre. The *pied de roi* was subdivided into twelve *pouces*, and the *pouce* consisted of twelve *lignes*. Antommarchi recorded his measurement of Napoleon's height as *cinq pieds, deux pouces, quatre lignes*; which is five feet six inches – corresponding to the average of the guesses made by British officers. Mulhall's *Dictionary of Statistics* (1891) gives the average height of French male adults in the nineteenth century as five feet five inches, and that of English males as five feet seven and a half inches.

4. Alsatians often pronounce their German names with a French accent, but for the Corsicans it is less easy. N. dropped the 'u' in his surname, which was then pronounced without sounding the final 'e'. The Military Hospital of Val de Grace in Paris is proud to own a letter signed in the earlier form, and the last known document signed Buonaparte is a letter to the Government announcing his marriage, dated March 11th, 1796 (21st Ventôse Year IV).

Enemies could always annoy N. by using the Italianate version of his name. Freud, in his book *Jokes and the Unconscious*, tells of an Italian lady who revenged herself on N. for a tactless remark, when he told her that all Italians danced badly – '*Tutti gli Italiani danzano si male*' – to which she replied '*Non tutti, ma buonaparte*'.

5. N. fervently admired the British Navy, though his personal experience of it was confined to the three ships on which he was a captive, *Undaunted*, *Bellerophon* and *Northumberland*. He said that he found the silence and orderly conduct so different to that in French ships, on which 'everyone calls and gives orders, and they gabble like so many geese'.

Chapter 4
THE SPECTRUM OF SEX

1. See Note 4, Chapter 1.

2. During the first stage in the process of development the infant derives sensual pleasure from stimulation of various parts of its body – thumb-sucking is an example. This auto-erotic stage is succeeded at about the age of 4 by a latent period during which, in the process of education, the sexual instinct is repressed and its driving force may be sublimated, i.e. directed into useful or respectable channels. Various aberrations at this period, according to Freud, may sow the seeds of future deviations of the sexual instinct. Next for a time the child finds pleasure in associating with members of its own sex, in the normal or physiological homosexual period. Homosexual friendships may occur but many pass through this phase more or less unconsciously, and without any physical manifestations of it. In *Les Enfants Terribles* Jean Cocteau calls it 'a state of desire, chaste, innocent of aim or name'. From this state the fortunate majority pass happily on and fix their attention on the opposite sex – 'leaving the time of boys' derision

for the time of boys' desire', as Cocteau puts it. But some may linger in a stage of development which they should have outgrown and get fixed there, less from choice than from misunderstanding of themselves. In less simple cases there may now develop the deviations of which the seeds were sown in earlier life; and the psychoanalyst must try to trace back and unravel the process which set the patient on the wrong road. There are many wrong roads. Many criminal, or merely curious, activities have been attributed to the driving power of deviated sexual feelings – ranging from fire-raising, shop-lifting etc. through minor sadistic activities to terrible mutilations and murder. Sadism, in which sexual emotions are aroused by infliction of pain, and masochism in which there is a desire to be humiliated or treated cruelly, often co-exist as sado-masochism. Sadism is fairly common because hate has been said to be a stronger motive power than love; aggression an atavistic instinct even more essential than procreation to the survival of the species. Sadism, often in only minor forms, and other deviations, very often co-exist with homosexuality, the commonest deviation of all.

Unhappiness can result from failure to comprehend the complexity of the spectrum of sex as it applies to an individual himself, or to partners in a marriage (when one or other may not conform to an idealised picture based upon lovers on stage or screen). Innocent victims of various deviations too often do not give a doctor a chance to help them to adjust themselves to life, before they have come into conflict with the Law.

3. Dr L.P. Clark, a New York psychiatrist, writing in 1929 in the New York *Medical Journal & Record*, made a detailed study of N.'s narcissism from early youth and through a 'baneful career of literally posing for posterity'. Posing for portraits and busts released his Roman pretensions, and Canova's colossal nude statue, of which only the head is N.'s, the body that of a superb Greek athlete, 'pleases our newly fledged emperor very much', linking him with Alexander, Caesar, and Charlemagne. Dr Clark's diagnosis, expressed in Freudian terms, is that 'the dominant fixations noted in N.'s character are pre-eminently oral erotism with an admixture of the power-mechanism of the anal character – acquisitiveness of power rather than its autocratic consolidation and perpetuation.' Dr Clark explains that N. directed the painter David how to paint the Coronation, but he does not mention that David was ordered to include Madame Mère in the scene, though she was not there. A Freudian might detect here an unconscious desire for the mother's love which was denied to the omnipotent emperor.

4. General Baron Jean Baptiste Antoine Marcellin Marbot; 1782-1854: son of a general who was a friend of Bonaparte and Lannes. He remembered his father in 1799, when he found the best rooms in inns and the freshest post-horses reserved for Bonaparte, saying, 'There's the beginning of omnipotence'. N. undertook to 'act a father's part' to young Marcellin after his father's death. Marbot was aide-de-camp to Lannes, who died in his arms after Essling. His experiences related in racy memoirs are said to have been Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's model for his flamboyant character Brigadier Gerard.

5. Dr Hillemand cites many examples of Napoleon's urge to slaughter animals, even the pet goats

of little Hortense Bertrand in St Helena. He actually bought a flock of goats in order to make of them '*un horrible carnage*'. Count Balmain's letter describing this began '*Le sang coule à Longwood.*'

Chapter 5
NAPOLEON & WOMEN

1. He was an admirer of Josephine, and made her a formal proposal of marriage after her divorce, which N. advised her to accept. But at the time of his inquiries in 1810 N. was naturally indignant with Josephine for going incognito to a private box at the theatre with Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and made this the excuse for ordering him to leave Paris within two days.

2. Mr Cronin has traced the long-lost middle section of *Clisson et Eugénie* and re-printed it as an appendix in *Napoleon*, (William Collins, 1971). If the novel does indeed portray N.'s feelings, this section indicates recognition of his own unusual nature, and intense desire that it should be changed for the better by the love of a warm-hearted wife and the birth of children.

3. *Deduit – jeux amoureux – divertissement amoureux* – 'love-making, gallantry' – is said in O. Bloch & W. von Wartburg's *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Francaise* (Paris, 1950) to have been obsolete since the seventeenth century. N. could have encountered it in his extensive reading of French literature.

Chapter 6
SWEETHEARTS & WIVES

1. There were among N.'s marshals men with outstanding qualities of leadership, and the ability fully equal to that of the great man himself, to inspire the loyal devotion of their soldiers. Masséna, Augereau and Bernadotte were examples. Most of the marshals were ambitious, but aimed no higher than to remain soldiers. Many hoped to amass great wealth, and Bernadotte was one of these; but it was probably only he who saw himself as a strong rival to N. as a potential national leader. This was more than enough to make him Napoleon's enemy for he disliked and frustrated the careers of any whose popularity or renown might rival his own.

2. This translation by J.M. Howell, in the American edition, is much closer to the original than the version in the English edition. Masson wrote: '*Vers elle, la maitresse âgée, mondaine et experte, c'est le cri de ces sens affamés, tout jeunes et tout neufs, de l'homme de vingt-six ans qui jusque la a vécu chaste.*'

Chapter 7
MISTRESSES

1. Contemporary gossip suggested that George, like Grassini, was amongst Wellington's spoils of war, and that she found his vigour an improvement on N's love-making. Personally I cannot imagine Wellington, at the peak of his fame, courted assiduously by women of all ages, being remotely interested in 'The Whale', except as an object of curiosity.

2. According to Countess Potocka, who was told 'in the spiciest manner' by Colonel Wonsowicz (who was also in the sleigh) N. 'after sulking for a few minutes', agreed with Caulaincourt, who argued that it would make a very bad impression that the Emperor should be 'thinking of his love affairs when he had lately

abandoned his routed army'. Countess Potocka must be considered a hostile witness. Her version of Marie Walewska's great romance reads: 'N. having expressed a wish to count a Pole among his conquests, one of the right kind was chosen — lovely and dull . . . . Married at sixteen to an octogenarian who never appeared in public in society, she had the position of a young widow. Her extreme youth, combined with such convenient circumstances, gave room to all sorts of surmises, and if N. was her last lover, it was asserted that he had not been the first.'

3. Dr James Roche Verling, a likeable young Irishman, was medical officer to the artillery when he was sent to live in Longwood, where he stayed for some fifteen months in 1818 and 1819. He never treated or even spoke to N., who refused to see him because he was a nominee of the Governor. Unremitting efforts were made to persuade him to agree to certain conditions on which N. would consult him. He was even offered money, but he refused to enter into any secret agreement, and insisted that he was just an army doctor posted to Longwood House. Finally Montholon tried to persuade N. to rely on Verling's honour as a doctor not to disclose 'any little disease or infirmity'; and N. then put to Montholon the hypothetical case of whether Verling would tell the Governor if the Emperor got venereal disease (*la chaude pisse*) Mr Cronin is in error in supposing that this question was put by N. to Verling himself.

Verling's main confidant in Longwood, and his most tiresome patient, was Madame Bertrand, a hysterical and hypochondriac woman, whom he found to be always tormented and tormenting him with 'a thousand chimerical complaints' and with a mind 'perpetually agitated by female jealousy'

(The diary kept by Verling in Longwood was presented to Napoleon III, who placed it in the National Archives. I am grateful to Miss Rosemary Dunhill for enabling me to read the type-written copy of it which is in the Bodleian Library.)

4. Dr Hillemand *[Pathologie de Napoleon,* 1970 dismisses the allegations of affairs in St Helena, holding that N.'s sexual desire was extinct, but not his obsession with sex, his urge to talk about it and to make boastful claims of past prowess. Dr Hillemand absolves Henry of having fabricated his description of N.'s hypogonadism, and suggests that N.'s sensitiveness about this lay at the root of his refusal to see any English doctor. He believes that O'Meara's veiled reference to a special reason why N. would not accept any doctors appointed by Hudson Lowe concerned N.'s hyogonadism. Towards the end of his life Dr Arnott was only allowed to examine him in the dark. Dr Hillemand quotes Gourgaud for this remark by Napoleon: *'Si O'Meara écrit jamais un journal il sera fort intéressant. S'il donne la longueur de mon c . . . ce ne sera que plus intéressant.'*

5. *The Allied Commissioners in St. Helena.*

Baron von Stürmer, the Austrian commissioner, was a young professional diplomat, who had married a Frenchwoman just before sailing from St Helena. A quarrel with the Governor Sir Hudson Lowe in 1818 led to his recall.

Count Balmain, the Russian, was of Scottish descent. The most likeable and able of the three, his memoirs are regarded as the most trustworthy. He got on well with Hudson Lowe, and married one of his step-daughters.

The French Commissioner was a member of the old aristocracy, the Marquis of Montchenu. N.'s opinion that he was just an old fool was soon shared by all.

6. When it was reported that the baby had been 'born in a caul' – i.e. with the foetal membrane covering the head, N. remarked, '*Et moi aussi, je suis né coiffé*' (the descriptive French term for this uncommon condition, which was considered lucky in Corsica). This comment was taken by some as support for Gourgaud's insinuations – an example of the rubbish which people were prepared to believe.

Chapter 8
NAPOLEON AND THE MALE SEX

1. General Maximilien Sébastien Foy, 1775-1825, an artillery man who first met N. in Italy. After serving under Marshal Masséna, in Switzerland he came under slight suspicion at the time of the Pichegru conspiracy. In the Peninsula, to which he went in 1807, he again served with Massena, who after his reverse at Torres Vedras sent Foy to Paris, hoping he could justify Masséna's actions in N.'s eyes. Foy was severely wounded at Toulouse, and after rejoining N. for the Hundred Days, was again wounded at Waterloo. Emerging from the Napoleonic wars with a fine reputation he subsequently had a successful career as a politician and author.

Foy's judgement on N. was: 'N. has perished; he has perished for having attempted to deal with men of the nineteenth century like the Attilas and the Genghis Khans.'

2. The friendship of Alexander and Hephaestion is generally recognised as having been a homosexual one. It is said that Alexander, in a passion of grief, lay stretched upon the body of Hephaestion for a whole day and night; hanged the physician Glaucias for the failure of his treatment (an occupational hazard for Alexander's medical attendants) and accorded to Hephaestion semi-divine honours. These two were recently called 'the best-known best-friends of the ancient world, after Achilles and Patroclus'. At Patroclus' funeral Achilles sacrificed 12 young Trojans, four of his horses, and two of his dogs.

Curiously enough N.'s sycophantic secretary, de Méneval, compared N.'s friendship with Desaix to that of Alexander and Hephaestion; though it seems highly unlikely that he intended to imply homosexuality. Desaix, one of N.'s young followers, died at Marengo at the age of 32, two years before de Méneval joined N.'s staff.

3. The un-named translator was literal if a bit stilted and unimaginative. As the passage is significant, and seems to go as far as one could expect, it is here given in the original – *Nul autre n'était dépositaire de tant et de si importans secrets de politique. La tournure de ses idées, plus justes qu'étendues, sa tenue parfaite, et plus que tout cela l'empire de l'habitude, l'avaient mis sur le pied de confident intime. On aurait qualifié autrement les rapports de Duroc avec Napoleon, si un prince de cette trempe avait pu avoir un favori.*

4. Robert's dictionary (1951) explains that favourites obtain their favour by 'indulging the vices of the sovereign' gives as an example the favourites of Henri III, the homosexual king, whose reign became known as the 'reign of the favourites'.

5. Dr Praetorius believed that

modern science pointed to the likelihood that homosexuality was constitutional or inborn – *geschlechtliche Neigungen meist Ausfluss angeborener Konstitution sind* – a theory which is supported by few, if any scientists today.

6. The French Commissioner in St Helena soon became a bit of a joke to the residents of the island. His notorious meanness about returning hospitality earned him the nickname of 'The Marquis of Montex cheznous'.

7. This is the version of Count Balmain, the Russian Commissioner whose St Helena reports are generally accepted as the most reliable. The versions of the Austrian and French Commissioners are as follows: Baron Stürmer: 'I really believe the man was in love with me and it began to bore me. Really now I could not love him as my mistress. He is losing his mind.' Marquis of Montchenu: 'He loves me too much; he obsesses me. What does he want of me? I cannot go to bed with him.'
Both of them also referred to N.'s comment on Gourgaud's threat to publish damaging revelations.

8. De Montholon, who had joined N's household as an aide-de-camp only in 1815, was left 2,000,000 francs in his will; Bertrand, Grand Marshal of the Palace since 1812, got 500,000 francs, a mere 100,000 frs more than Marchand, premier valet-de-chambre since 1814.

9. Louis Charles Alexandre Sainte Catherine d'Audiffredi was the son of a nephew of Josephine. He died in 1816 at her old home, Les Trois Ilets.

10. Lady Shelley, with whom the Tsar was much taken during his visit to England in 1814, was far from being impressed, and wrote: 'He has a bad figure, tightened in at the waist, and has a chest like a woman.' She decided that he had been much over-praised, and described him as 'a foolish, good-natured dancing Dandy'. He gave her a message for the Duke of Wellington, whom she adored. Knowing the Duke's dry undemonstrative nature Lady Shelley must have been amused that the Tsar's message should end with – '*Dites lui que je l'aime comme ma maîtresse.*' I think it would take a very odd man to send such a message to Wellington. In the same year a young girl, 17 years old Maria Capel, wrote of the Tsar Alexander 'not the least handsome – horribly pink and pudding like'. (*The Capel Letters* by the Marquess of Anglesey, Cape 1955.)

11. The initial 'C' seems to rule out the possibility that 'MrCH' might have been Sir James Hall, of Dunglass in Haddingtonshire, whose son Captain Basil Hall was told by N. in St Helena that, though his father had not mixed much with the other cadets, he had never forgotten him as he was the first Englishman he ever met. (*Mon Entrevue avec Napoléon* – B. Hall. Paris 1832.) Mr Cronin suggests that 'Mr CH' was 'perhaps a certain Cumming of Craigmillar'.

The Leipsic pamphlet asserts that de Bourrienne was N.'s first friend, and that in Paris his only friends at the Royal Military School were Lauriston and Dupont, a statement to which no attention has been paid by later writers. Masson said that in Paris he had one friend – des Mazis, and one enemy – Phélippeaux, who later was the engineer who fortified Acre against N.

12. This may not have been quite the end of Laugier's mischief-making. The author of the 1802 Leipsic pamphlet sets out to refute false stories about N. told by Laugier to a friend, especially one about N. inviting Laugier to visit his room at

night. He points out that they were all locked into the dormitories, each in his little cell, with servants watching the corridors all night. He described N. as reserved, lonely and slow to make friends; nicknamed 'The Spartan' – hardly the sort of boy for nightly snuggles with a 'nymph'.

13. He was a young Saxon rifleman who served under both N. and Wellington. Captured during Masséna's retreat from Torres Vedras he joined the King's German Legion. Goethe wrote introductions for the six volumes of his memoirs. For long known only as *Der Junge Feldjäger*, he was identified in 1916, by the Library of Congress, Washington, USA, as Johan Christian Mämpel.

14. He was the ill-used bastard son of a doctor, whose mother-in-law, called by the child his *bonne maman*, was giving embroidery lessons to Marie Louise; so the young bursar had an unusual peephole on the Emperor's private life. He wrote an entertaining book, but in the Earl of Rosebery's copy (in the magnificent Durdans Collection given by Lady Sibyl Grant to the National Library of Scotland) the famous owner has written 'A begging letter to N III, composed one would think of fairy tales' – a pity, for some of the tales are great fun, especially one in which the author, now a merchant seaman aged 21, and miserably jealous of his friend young Las Cases for being with his hero in St Helena, sails to rescue N. in the good ship *Zénobie* – with her master Captain Lépissoir. They land, meet Montholon and N. and beg them to escape. N. refuses as he feels death approaching. He was dead in six months. *Zénobie* and her oddly named captain do not sail into any of the recognised history books.

Chapter 9
A TENTATIVE DIAGNOSIS

1. The great Corsican neither spoke nor wrote good French. One of his habitual mis-spellings was to write *enfanterie* instead of *infanterie*. This could have been a 'Freudian slip' – i.e. a seemingly accidental mistake in writing or speech, which Freud considered to be at least partly the expression of some emotional conflict.

Chapter 10
WHO WAS THE FATHER OF THE KING OF ROME

1. General Malet, who attempted a *coup d'état* in 1812 said in a proclamation that France was 'too proud to accept a bastard child'.

2. General Count Adam Albert Neipperg: 1775-1829: served in Austrian army, and as Austrian ambassador to Sweden. Wounded and captured at Doelen in 1790, he lost his right eye, possibly owing to maltreatment as a prisoner of war. In 1814, he was attached by the Emperor Francis to his daughter Marie Louise, N.'s second wife.

3. In 1840 the Duke of Wellington, speaking to Lord Stanhope about Marie Louise, said: 'She afterwards said to someone "the Duke of Wellington little knows the service he has done me by winning the battle of Waterloo!" The fact is she was then with child by Neipperg, whom she afterwards married; and if Napoleon had prevailed she would have had to return to him in that state.'

4. In *The Daily Telegraph* June 2nd 1971 a possible thirteen months pregnancy was reported. One consultant considered that this was unlikely, and pointed out that 'the

pill' often makes calculations difficult. However a spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists was quoted as saying that 'there was no reason to discount the claim of a thirteen month pregnancy. In fact there had been much historical evidence in medicine to show that long pregnancies have occurred'.

5. Medical historians place the year in which this was done as somewhere between 1791 and 1793 – the date of John Hunter's death. The earliest human case is attributed to the anatomist Bartholomeus Eustachius in about 1550. Artificial insemination in horse breeding was used by the Arabs at the beginning of the 14th century.

6. N's hypogonadism, (his external genital organs being described by some medical writers as 'infantile') and other indications of pituitary eunuchoidism, suggest that he may have been sterile. The hypogonadism probably led to psychological impotence, which is not necessarily a permanent condition, but may wax and wane with circumstances.

Chapter 11
FAMILY HISTORY

1. Part of Lucien's letter is quoted in Richardson's *Dictionary of Napoleon*. 'I have always discerned in Napoleon an ambition not entirely egotistical but which overcomes his desire for the public good; I am convinced that in a free state he would be a dangerous man. He seems to me to have a strong inclination to be a tyrant, and I believe he would be one if he were king and that his name would be for posterity, and for the sensitive patriot, a name of horror. I see, and not for the first time, that in case of a Revolution Napoleon would endeavour to ride on the billows, and I think that for his personal interest he would be capable of becoming a turncoat etc. etc.'

endeavour to ride on the billows, and I think that for his personal interest he would be capable of becoming a turncoat etc. etc.'

2. Laure Junot had more reason to dislike Caroline Bonaparte, whose affair with her husband she never forgave or forgot. This was not the only occasion on which Junot was unfaithful to her; but there were faults on both sides. She had affairs with a Royalist, Maurice Balincourt with the young Honoré de Balzac, and with Prince Metternich. This last liaison caused a public scandal, as Junot used physical violence to his wife. N.'s half-hearted advances to Laure have been mentioned in Chapter 7.

3. 'Compelled to appear at the court of the new empress, and eagerly seizing an opportunity of insulting her, Pauline went so far as to make behind her back, while passing through the salon, a sign with her two fingers accompanied by indecent tittering, which the common people apply, in their gross style of derision, to a credulous and deluded spouse.'

The Court and Camp of Buonaparte. London. John Murray 1831.

4. In making such arbitrary decisions about which scandals to believe it is difficult not to be influenced by pre-conceived ideas about N.'s mentality. It may be naive to reject accusations of incest partly through sympathy with Hortense. American psychiatrists now write about a so-called 'Phaedra Complex'. Phaedra, wife of Theseus, committed suicide because of her love for her stepson Hippolytus. In modern society, we

are told, the Phaedra Complex more often affects a daughter and her step-father. As the girl reaches adolescence and starts taking an interest in the opposite sex, the step-father may be the natural focus of her attention. As there is no blood relationship between them she is not protected by what Freud called the incest taboo.

5. General Count August Charles Joseph de Flahaut de la Billarderie: 1785-1870. Illegitimate son of Talleyrand; taken by his mother to England after her husband was guillotined during the Revolution. Joined French army under Bonaparte in Italian campaign; commissioned 1800, aide-de-camp to Murat; after extensive campaigning became brigadier general in 1813, aide-de-camp to N.; major-general and count after battle of Leipsic. In 1817 married Margaret Elphinstone, daughter of Lord Keith. Returned to France in 1827, and followed a diplomatic career; ambassador to Austria in 1841; senator 1853.

Chapter 12
PERSONALITY AND ACHIEVEMENT

1. General Cambronne, commanding the Guard, no more said, '*La Garde meurt mais elle ne se rend pas*' than Wellington said, 'Up Guards and at 'em'. Like an American general in the second world war, called upon to surrender, who replied 'Nuts', Cambronne shouted '*Merde*', an expletive still referred to in polite society as *le mot de Cambronne*. Wellington said to Croker: 'Never, certainly, was anything so absurd as ascribing that saying to Cambronne' (referring to the heroic declamation) and he went on to describe how Generals Mouton and Cambronne came to see him on the evening of Waterloo. He refused to see them or let them have supper with him, because he 'thought they had behaved so very ill to the King of France'.

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